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ABSTRACT

This report provides a review of the United Kingdom (UK) and international literature about initiatives to stimulate demand for post-16 learning. Chapter 1 introduces sources and method. Chapter 2 outlines the current pattern of participation in learning activity in the UK and identifies the main barriers impeding further involvement. Chapters 3-5 describe a range of initiatives aimed at stimulating demand for learning across the world. Initiatives have been categorized into three broad types. Chapter 3 considers initiatives stimulating mass demand through widespread publicity, provision of advice and guidance or funding, and making the provision of learning more flexible. Chapter 4 examines initiatives stimulating demand for learning among targeted groups of individuals (including young people and women, and people with particular skill deficits) and communities (particularly those in rural or inner city areas). Chapter 5 addresses initiatives stimulating demand among employees and for work-related learning. Chapter 6 draws conclusions. Appendixes include a list of initiatives cited in the review and a 54-item bibliography. (YLB)

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attracting new learners

a literature review

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Note
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was formerly known as FEDA.

Preface

This report, prepared by the Institute for Employment Studies, reviews UK and international literature about initiatives to stimulate demand for learning. Commissioned by the Learning and Skills Development Agency, it provides background for an international seminar hosted by the Agency in June 2001. The review and seminar represent the first stage in a longer term project to develop research and inform policy and practice on successful ways to increase participation in learning. A particular concern is to identify ways to engage people who have benefited least from education and training in the past and may be 'hard to reach'.

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The Learning and Skills Development Agency is a strategic national resource for the development of policy and practice in post -16 education and training. The Agency's activities include research, with partners, to underpin the development of future policy for post-16 education and training. We also have a clear emphasis on work-based training while maintaining a focus on colleges and developing and defining professional practice for managers, teachers and lecturers. The Agency works with organisations that specialise in adult and community learning and supports schools post-16.

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1. Introduction

This report provides a review of the UK and international literature about initiatives to stimulate demand for post-16 learning. It is written as a background paper for the two-day international seminar hosted by the Learning and Skills Development Agency in June 2001 to examine ways to increase the demand for learning.

1.1 Purpose of the project

The aim of the review was to identify and analyse relevant literature both from within the UK, and from other countries of relevance to the UK, on policy and practice initiatives intending to stimulate demand for post-16 learning.

Where possible we searched for material which offered a critique and/or an evaluation of the initiatives, although this was more difficult to find than descriptions of the initiatives themselves. In analysing the material we sought to identify factors which appeared to contribute to the success or otherwise of initiatives.

1.2 Sources and method

To identify the material we employed a three-pronged search strategy involving:

- searching databases such as BIDS Education Index (British Education Index, ERIC, the US Educational Resources Information Center), using combinations of the following search terms:
  - adult, vocational, post-16
  - learning, education, training
  - (stimulate) demand, motivation
  - policy, initiatives, evaluation
- a general Internet search using the above terms
- searching specific websites for evidence of activity in the area, use of site-specific databases, policy agendas *etc.* Websites include:

- **UK**
  - Department for Education and Employment
  - Campaign for Learning
  - UfI
  - Centre for Continuing Education, Sussex University
  - LSDA/FEDA
  - NACETT
  - NIACE
  - NFER
  - NAGCELL (National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning)
  - Trade Union Learning Fund
  - York Consulting
- **International**
  - CEDEFOP
  - OECD
  - UNESCO
  - Adult Learning Australia
  - Australian National Training Authority
  - Australian Council for Education and Research
  - NCVER Australia
  - DETYA (Dept of Education, Training and Youth Affairs) Australia
  - US Department of Labor
  - US Employment and Training Administration
  - America's Learning Exchange
  - National Center for Education and Statistics
  - American Council on Education
  - National Institute for Adult Literacy.

All relevant material and initiatives identified were then noted and logged into a database. Initiatives were included on the grounds that they intended directly or indirectly to improve the level or character of demand for learning. Initiatives that primarily acted on the supply side, *eg* by affecting the content or form of learning provision, were excluded, unless they were explicitly aimed at stimulating demand.

Within the timescale and budget available we had to confine ourselves to material in English. This means that we cannot claim

our search to be comprehensive, although it does cover a good cross-section of the schemes that are or have been in operation.

It is important to consider that many barriers to learning are inextricably linked to each other. This is particularly the case for non-learners, whom policy makers seek to engage. For example, those who have not done any learning since they left school may face barriers of attitude, confidence, funding, basic skills and lack of time or childcare issues, all of which would need to be overcome before they were both willing and able to participate in learning. Hence many initiatives, particularly those targeted towards disadvantaged groups and individuals, aim to impact on more than one of the barriers to participation in learning simultaneously.

With this in mind it may be helpful to look at initiatives in terms of their target groups. These can range from initiatives to target individuals who have particular disadvantages, to a general promotion of learning across the whole population. Secondly, some initiatives do employ particular discrete methods in their approaches, for example, initiatives to provide funding, initiatives to provide advice and guidance, initiatives to engage interest through outreach *etc.*

In categorising the initiatives identified during our review we have therefore attempted to distinguish between:

- the group at whom the initiative is aimed, and
- the general method adopted.

1.3 Structure of the report

In Chapter 2 we briefly set the scene by outlining the current pattern of participation in learning activity in the UK and identify what are thought to be the main barriers impeding further involvement.

In the following three chapters we describe a range of initiatives aimed at stimulating demand for learning across the world. Initiatives are primarily grouped according to the target populations they have been designed to reach and then by the main method they adopt. However, a number of initiatives are aimed at a range of groups and/or adopt multi-level approaches and inevitably do not fit neatly into any simple classification. Where possible such programmes have been allocated on the basis of the 'best fit', *ie* by their most significant target group or approach.

Initiatives have been categorised into three broad types:

- stimulating mass demand, through widespread publicity, provision of advice and guidance or funding and making the

provision of learning more flexible; these are considered in Chapter 3

- stimulating demand for learning among targeted groups of individuals (including young people and women, and people with particular skill deficits) and communities (particularly those in rural or inner city areas), examined in Chapter 4
- stimulating demand among employees and for work-related learning – Chapter 5.

Finally we draw together some conclusions from the review in Chapter 6.

2. The Demand for Learning

There is no single accepted definition of an 'adult learner' in the literature – either in terms of who is an adult, or what constitutes learning. The different definitions are reflected in the various sources of statistical data and, to an extent, in the results that they portray, *ie* the wider the definition of learning, the greater the apparent number of participants (see Hillage *et al.*, 2000 for a description of the main sources of data). In the brief examination of participation trends below we have focused on adults aged 25 or older, although in our review of initiatives in the subsequent chapters we have focused more widely to include measures aimed at anyone over the compulsory education age of 16.

2.1 Level of participation

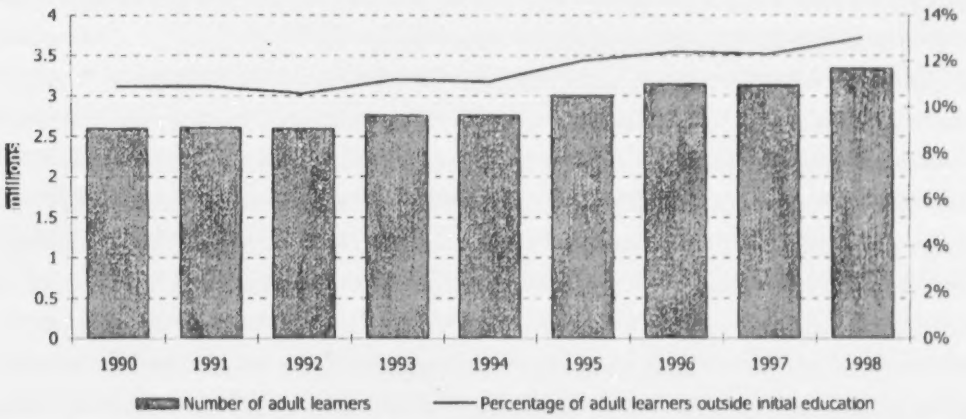
According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which tracks more formal vocational education and training, over 3.3 million adults were participating in learning activity[1] at the end of 1998 (see Figure 2.1). This represents some 13 per cent of adults in the age group, excluding the further 300,000 who were attending full-time education (*eg* at a university).

At the other end of the spectrum of adult learner definitions, the National Adult Learners Survey (NALS) found that 68 per cent of the total population had taken part in some kind of learning activity (excluding involvement in continuous full-time education) in the previous three years. However, there are important differences in the two data sets in terms of definitions and coverage. NALS includes either taught or non-taught learning and/or vocational or non-vocational learning and refers to the previous three years (not four weeks as does the LFS). It also covers all 16 to 69 year olds (in and out of work). The latest available data was collected in 1997 and we await publication of the 2000 survey.

The data in Figure 2.1 also suggest that in more formal vocational education and training the participation rate has been rising

[1] Enrolled for part-time study at an educational institution, undertaking a part-time correspondence course; or involved with either off or on-the-job training in the last four weeks.

Figure 2.1: Participation in learning



Source: Labour Force Survey

during the 1990s from around 11 per cent in the early part of the decade. Other data (*eg* participation in further education or higher education courses *etc.*) also suggests a rise in participation in the early to mid-1990s, although the trend appears to have flattened off as we entered the 21st century (for example, see Figure 2.2). Some commentators (*eg* Green, 1999) argue that, while the amount of work-based training undertaken rose in the 1990s, the average length of a training episode fell and therefore the volume of training was no higher than in the mid-1990s. Most recently, the DfEE's Learning at Work Survey (DfEE, 2001) shows that the average number of off-the-job training days per employee trained fell from 8.6 to 8.2 between 1999 and 2000.

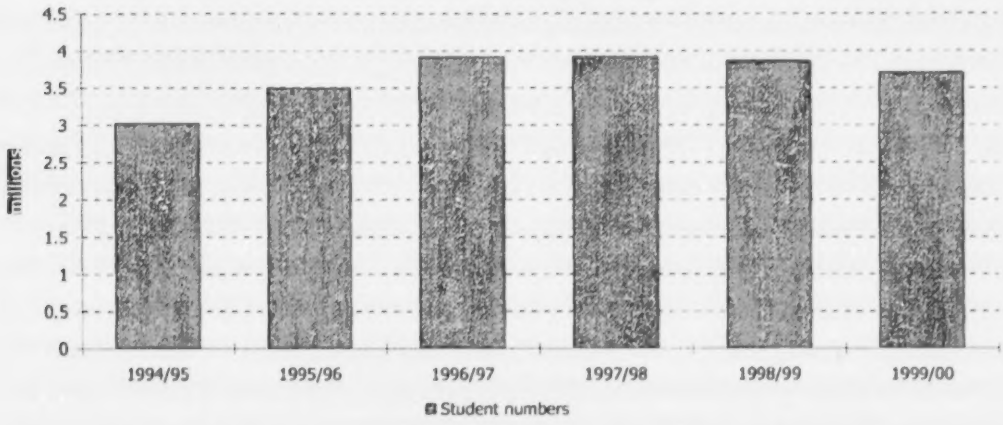
So the data on participation suggest at best a rising trend that has flattened off in recent years and although a wider group of people may therefore be involved in education and training their involvement may be less intense or deep.

2.2 Who participates?

Participation in education and training varies by a number of key variables:

- **previous educational experience** – a range of studies (*eg* Beinart and Smith, 1997; Tuckett and Sargant, 1999) have found a very strong, positive link between the length of time people spend in initial education and the qualifications they obtain on the one hand and their participation in education and training in later life on the other. This is probably the single most important variable explaining participation in lifelong learning. A number of the measures discovered in subsequent chapters aim to maximise individuals'

Figure 2.2: Students attending Further Education colleges



Source: FEFC

involvement in initial education and prevent people dropping out too early

- **labour market status** – people in employment are much more likely than the unemployed or those 'not in the labour force' to access and participate in training. Some 16 per cent of LFS learners were employed compared with only nine per cent of the unemployed cohort. The 1997 National Adult Learners Survey (NALS) confirms the divide between employed and unemployed participation. Almost nine in ten full-time employees (88 per cent) and almost eight in ten part-time employees (78 per cent) had taken part in a learning activity in the past three years. Conversely, less than half of the respondents who were looking after home or family, or were retired or incapable of work due to long-term illness, injury or disability reported any learning activity (Beinart and Smith, 1997)
- **occupation** – here is a clear correlation between type of occupation and levels of participation. NALS found that learners were more likely than non-learners to have worked in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations and were less likely to have worked in craft and related occupations or as plant and machine operatives (Beinart and Smith, 1997)
- **age** – those involved in some form of learning tend to be younger than non-learners (Beinart and Smith, 1997)
- **gender** – according to the most recent data women in work are more likely than men to undertake training (Hillage *et al.*, 2000). However, NALS found that across the population as a whole the reverse was the case (Beinart and Smith, 1997)
- **ethnicity** – further and higher education statistics suggest that there may be greater variation in participation patterns

between groups of different social and ethnic backgrounds than between the sexes. A considerably higher proportion of members of ethnic minorities continue in full-time education than members of the white population (Hillage *et al.*, 2000). The NALS data suggest that members of ethnic minorities are highly motivated to learn but may face more difficulties in participating as adults (Beinart and Smith, 1997)

- **location** – participation varies by geographical location, reflecting as much the underlying make-up of the local population and labour market as any other regional factor. NALS respondents in the Eastern and South East regions were the most likely to have taken part in a recent learning activity (80 per cent and 78 per cent respectively), while those in Merseyside (68 per cent) and the North East (64 per cent) were the least likely to have done so (Beinart and Smith, 1997).

2.3 Barriers to participation

People not participating in learning (non-learners) are not a homogenous group and include:

- those that simply do not feel motivated to engage in learning through lack of confidence, disaffection or a feeling that 'it is not for them', and
- individuals who would like to undertake learning but are unable to because of external barriers.

Both sets of non-learners experience barriers to participation which are different but nonetheless interrelated. For example, lack of motivation to take up learning may stem from external factors such as lack of opportunity, a perceived lack of benefit or insufficient incentives.

The barriers cited by non-learners usually fall into three distinct clusters:

- attitudinal barriers, including confidence and motivation
- physical and material barriers, such as finance and time, and
- structural barriers around the way education and training is provided.

2.3.1 Attitudinal barriers

There is a set of reasons associated with attitudes to learning, which constrain the initial desire to learn:

- **lack of confidence** – although not often expressed in surveys, the fear of failure and individuals' lack of confidence in their ability to learn emerges in interviews as a major deterrent with

other obstacles (lack of time *etc.*) given as 'face-saving' reasons (McGivney 1990; 1999)

- **lack of motivation** – in NALS, 39 per cent of respondents preferred to spend free time doing other things. In the IES follow-up study of older people a similar proportion felt they had better things to do than learn (Dench and Regan, 2000)
- **negative attitudes to education and training** – the recent Policy Action Team (PAT) report (DfEE, 1999b) on skills argued that deep-seated cultural attitudes (perhaps emanating from negative school experiences) among non-learners led them to believe that they had nothing to gain from engagement with learning. There are also felt to be links between lack of literacy and negative attitudes to training/learning generally (DfEE, 1999a)
- **peer group culture** – people who belong to social or occupational groups for whom engaging in learning is not a 'normal' or habitual activity often develop an anti-learning culture which may be difficult for individuals to go against (McGivney, 1990)
- **perceptions of irrelevance** – many non-participants cannot see what tangible benefit they might gain from engaging in learning. For example, Tamkin and Hillage (1997) looked at research carried out in relation to non-participation in vocational training. They cite a survey carried out by Rigg in 1981 of 2,500 individuals. Those disinterested in further training gave the following reasons:
  - perceptions of being too old (workers over 45)
  - perceptions that training is only associated with a new job (younger workers)
  - satisfaction with current task and level (manual workers)
  - possession of sufficient qualifications (small number of respondents), and
  - feelings of inadequacy (small number of respondents).

A survey among older learners found that a lack of time, and the belief that learning was not important were the main reasons for non-participation. Personal and external barriers (such as a lack of availability and information) were not reported so frequently (Dench and Regan, 2000).

2.3.2 Physical and material barriers

A second set of constraints covers physical and material barriers which prevent people from taking up learning opportunities even if they wanted to. Of these, financial barriers and time barriers are the ones most frequently cited by respondents to all the participation surveys:

- **financial constraints** – difficulties in meeting the direct costs (fees) and indirect costs (*eg* transport, books, childcare *etc.*) of learning. Twenty-one per cent of NALS respondents found difficulty paying fees for courses. There are suggestions that one of the issues about cost is that non-learners do not know or value the potential financial rate of return from an investment in learning.

  Cost can be a barrier to employers providing training. Keep (1999) states that:

  '. . . In many sectors, SMEs find the financing and delivery of adult training problematic.'

  In a survey of small firms in 1995, 43 per cent said that the cost of training was the main factor discouraging involvement (DfEE, 1995).

- **time constraints** – a significant proportion of non-learners in NALS said that they were too busy with work (29 per cent), or family (24 per cent).

  'Those adults that stay at home to look after a family are only half as likely as even the registered unemployed to have taken part in some vocational training during the previous three years' (Calder and McCollum, 1998, in Edwards *et al.*, 1998)

- **lack of good and affordable childcare** – this is one of the most common reasons given by women for not engaging in learning

- **lack of information** – another frequently cited obstacle to learning. Some 20 per cent of NALS respondents cited lack of knowledge of local learning opportunities as a reason for not learning

- **geographical isolation** – people living in isolated estates and rural areas are less likely than average to have time to participate in learning (Tremlett *et al.*, 1995). Older students (aged 25+) are more concerned with location and nearness to 'home' than younger students in choosing which university to apply to (IES, 1999).

2.3.3 Structural barriers

The final set of obstacles concerns the way in which learning opportunities are provided and the lack of appropriate provision, either in terms of content or format:

- **lack of local learning opportunities** – in some areas there are few organised learning opportunities available within easy reach of people's homes or few of a kind that people want or are able to join. People with disabilities or ill health may have particular problems in gaining access to education or training programmes

- **availability of work-related training** – in terms of job-related training, participation may be dependent on whether an employer actually provides training and development opportunities. It is sometimes difficult for employers to find courses or qualifications that are relevant to an employee's particular learning need

- **benefit disincentives** – the 16-hour rule and fear of losing welfare benefits has proved a significant disincentive to some unemployed people who might otherwise have entered a learning programme.

2.4 Conclusion

The data cited at the beginning of this chapter suggest that overall participation in learning activities in the UK is at best on a mildly upward trend. However, a more detailed examination may help to distinguish between participation rates among different groups of people, *eg* between young, well-educated professionals who are most likely to be 'active learners' and 'non-learners' who tend to be older, not in work and who have had a minimal initial education.

It is this latter group of 'non-learners' in whom we are most interested. While it may be a legitimate aim of policy to get learners to learn more or learn something different, the main target of initiatives to raise demand for learning is to engage people without a strong learning track record. Here the distinction made between people who are not interested in learning, for whatever reason, and those who are but feel impeded by some structural or other barrier from taking part may be helpful. In the following chapters we look at various types of initiatives, from those aimed at the population at large to one targeted at particular groups, from those based in the community to ones aimed at people in work. The measures needed to motivate someone to be interested in learning, to encourage them to see the value in learning, to have the confidence to take part, may be quite different from measures designed to overcome a particular hurdle, *eg* cost, caring or transport.

3. Stimulating Mass Demand

The first group of initiatives we consider are those which are designed to stimulate demand for learning for a wide range of individuals, rather than those which target particular groups. Four broad approaches have been identified:

- promoting interest in lifelong learning to promote the virtues of learning and the available opportunities
- providing information and advice on how to turn interest into actuality
- subsidising participation through universal funding routes
- making provision more flexible and accessible and therefore stimulate demand.

3.1 Initiatives aiming to engage interest in learning

The best examples of initiatives to engage interest come from the UK and Australia. In the UK, the Campaign for Learning is responsible for a range of events to stimulate demand for learning, at both national and community level. In Australia, the community group Adult Learning Australia organises events to promote learning, some of which have been borrowed from the UK. Other initiatives to engage interest include media campaigns, and new strategies, such as those embedded in the objectives of the University for Industry in the UK. Whilst there is some evidence of the effect of mass media campaigns in stimulating demand (see initiatives to promote basic skill acquisition later on in this Chapter) many of the initiatives are too new, or too fragmented, to have been subject to systematic evaluation.

3.1.1 Adult Learners' Week

The Adult Learners' Week (ALW) is an annual event, co-ordinated nationally by NIACE. Publicity includes around 5,000 local events, 800 press articles and TV coverage. The free telephone helpline attracts up to 57,000 callers, one third of whom take up courses as a result, and over half of whom are long-term unemployed (publicity for the helpline is also distributed in every unemployment benefit payment around the time of the campaign) (Sargant and Tuckett, 1997).

The BBC contribution to Adult Learners' Week in 1992 was called 'Second Chance'. It consisted of 15 lighthearted sketches, each lasting around 90 seconds. They featured well-known personalities and were shown at peak times on BBC1. The sketches focused on different target audiences, *eg*:

- Bankrupt – featured Nigel Havers and Dennis Waterman, and targeted men facing redundancy and unemployment
- Lovejoy – featured Ian McShane and Dianne Parrish, and targeted small employers, encouraging them to support their staff in gaining NVQs
- The Brittas Empire – featured Chris Barrie, and targeted men with few or no qualifications but who felt stuck in their present work
- EastEnders – featured Wendy Richard and Susan Tully, and targeted busy but underemployed women with few or no qualifications
- 2 point 4 children – featured Belinda Lang and Gary Olsen, and targeted people who might feel embarrassed about learning for pleasure.

The evaluation of Second Chance commented that this high profile method of intensive and expensive bi-media broadcasting had not been used before. A detailed breakdown of the viewing patterns of these sketches revealed that over nine million people watched one of the sketches. In a survey of audience awareness, the EastEnders and Lovejoy sketches were the two most commonly remembered (Sargent and Tuckett, 1997).

3.1.2 Television campaigns

Other television campaigns in the UK include BBC's Summer Nights (UK), 1970s literacy and numeracy campaign (Sargant and Tuckett, 1997) and the promotion of learning through soap operas on radio (*eg* the Archers) and television (*eg* Brookside). Such exposure is felt to be very valuable in raising awareness and destigmatising participation in learning, but in most of these cases we were unable to find evidence to underpin such assertions.

3.1.3 Radio campaigns

In the UK, week-long education campaigns were run on Radio 1 in the UK throughout the 1990s, with similar initiatives in other EU states. The campaigns were targeted at young unemployed people in particular. Up to 15,000 people a week called the Euroaction helplines which led the BBC to establish a telephone action line to support each radio station. In addition, radio offers more scope than television for targeting specific audiences:

- BBC Radio Stoke linked with literacy providers to develop a range of basic skills programmes
- Capital Radio sponsors the London course guide Floodlight
- Black and Asian radio stations offer a mechanism for targeting minority ethnic communities.

3.1.4 The Campaign for Learning (UK)

The Campaign for Learning (UK) is a national charity championing lifelong learning, which was initiated by the RSA in 1995. Its initiatives include:

- **The National Learning Forum**, for professionals to discuss how best to create a learning society
- **Project Partnerships**, creating on-the-ground learning opportunities
- **'Making London Curious'** advertising campaign
- **Learning at Work Day** to stimulate learning activities in the workplace (see below), now in its fourth year
- **New Year Learning Resolutions Campaign**, country-wide events and activities to encourage learning (www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk).

3.1.5 Adult Learning Australia

Adult Learning Australia is a community group with a strong website presence (www.ala.asn.au/). ALA is currently searching for ways to stimulate demand for learning, looking internationally for effective initiatives and campaigns. Interest is strong for UK initiatives such as The Campaign for Learning, Investors in People and the University for Industry. Adult Learning Australia is currently responsible for the following:

- **Adult Learners' Week** – adapted from the British model
- **Adult Learning Online database** – a searchable directory of information on education providers, tutors consultants, courses, events *etc.*
- **Learning Circles Australia** – promotion of self-managed learning groups of between five and 15 people, regularly to learn about an issue of importance to them *eg* social or environmental issues
- **Learning Cities** – the first steps have been taken by regional communities to promote learning through Learning Cities initiatives.

3.1.6 University for Industry (UK)

The UK's University for Industry (Ufl) – is intended as a new kind of organisation for open and distance learning. Its strategic objectives include stimulating demand in new and existing markets for lifelong learning among individuals and businesses by providing a clear route to learning opportunities, and to promote availability and access to innovative learning opportunities through using ICT. It will mainly act as an enabler and a broker for learning products supplied by other organisations. These products should be made widely accessible in terms of time and location, to suit the users. The scheme was launched in Autumn 2000 under the learndirect brand name and is not intended to be fully operational until 2004. Government forecasts hope to have 2.4 million individuals and businesses using the service by 2002, and up to 60,000 a year pursuing its learning programmes. The Ufl will offer taster courses through the learndirect website to enable customers to check the appropriateness of a course before committing to it. The courses will be available in bite-sized chunks, enabling users to fit learning around work pressures and lifestyle.

3.2 Initiatives providing information, advice and guidance

Outside formal education where careers services, and most recently in the UK the Connexions service, provide a range of advice and guidance services to young people, there is a range of initiatives providing information, advice and guidance to adults. They can have an impact in at least two ways:

- promoting a learning pathway – by providing information and guidance which introduces learning as a suitable, and practical route
- acting as a portal or gateway – linking people interested in learning with suitable opportunities, helping to turn this interest into a reality.

learndirect in the UK (see below) is an example of a service which aims to do both of these. In the US, the websites 'America's Learning eXchange' and 'America's Career Infonet' serve a similar purpose. National initiatives in Ireland and Portugal make provision for career guidance and motivation to undertake training and learning. An alternative approach, currently being trialled in Denmark, is to provide guidance in new forms and in new places, in order to reach those people who would not normally contact conventional services. Whilst all of these have the potential to affect demand in addition to simply providing information, it is not clear how successful any of these initiatives are in stimulating demand.

3.2.1 learndirect (UK)

'learndirect' was launched in the UK in 1998, and aims to provide impartial information and advice on courses and finance which will enable adults to plan and implement learning and career development. Hence those who have been out of the workforce for some time, those wishing to change career direction, those who face redundancy and need to retrain, and other potential learners can gain information about local careers advice, availability of courses, financial support, childcare provision *etc.* Employers can also use learndirect to access advice on appropriate training for their employees. learndirect is operated in conjunction with UfI. The free learndirect helpline is an integral part of the UfI through providing information on UfI approved courses. learndirect will be the point of entry to the UfI for many users. It has been subject to an early evaluation which looked at the process of operation and user satisfaction on a qualitative basis. learndirect handled over 400,000 calls during its first year, far in excess of the 250,000 target. However, less than half the callers were able to get through first time, and callers with low or no qualifications were under-represented. The service was also found to be better at handling course enquiries than enquiries about careers (Verry, 2000; Bysshe *et al.*, 1999).

3.2.2 America's Learning eXchange

America's Learning eXchange aims to connect people to training via its website. It acts as an on-line broker/electronic marketplace where individuals and companies can search for appropriate training and education resources.

3.2.3 America's Career Infonet

America's Career Infonet is a virtual occupational and economic information source to help with making informed career decisions.

3.2.4 Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) (UK)

The Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) is a UK service introduced by the DfEE in 1999. It was subjected to an initial qualitative evaluation in 2000 which found that IAG was helping to promote a more strategic approach. Most users questioned had been satisfied with the service, and some had enrolled in education or training as a result. More vigorous marketing of the service was suggested (Sims *et al.*, 2000).

3.2.5 Guidance Centre Experiments (Denmark)

New forms of guidance have been recently been provided in Denmark through collaboration between the employment service and educational institutions. Guidance desks have been set up in busy places, where they are highly visible and can be easily accessed by the community, and a new qualification for guidance counsellors has been introduced (Eurydice, 2000).

3.2.6 The 'Back to Education' initiative (Ireland)

The 'Back to Education' initiative is being developed in Ireland, using part-time expansion to build on existing programmes. It aims to motivate people unwilling or unable to take full-time options, and encouraging the combination of training with work and/or family responsibilities (Eurydice, 2000).

3.2.7 National Agency for Adult Learning (Portugal)

The National Agency for Adult Learning was set up in Portugal in 1999, and is responsible for the motivation of the adult population to undertake continuing education and training, by acting on both demand and supply sides. It will finance and support education and training, with special emphasis on personalised support and distance education (DfEE, 1999c).

3.3 Universal funding routes

In this review we have used the term 'universal funding routes' to describe initiatives which provide funding or subsidised training to a wide range of people not engaged in learning – while there may be some targeting in terms of promotion, provision is not totally exclusive. Individual Learning Accounts, of which there are examples in the UK, the USA, Canada and Sweden, aim to encourage individuals to save and take responsibility for their own learning, by providing incentives, *eg* matched funding, discounts *etc*. There has been some evaluation of the prototype UK model, which suggested that it shows promise, although there is certainly room for improvement. A small-scale method of stimulating demand was found in Denmark, in the form of a network of institutions which provide liberal education courses free of charge to all sections of the population.

In more detail the initiatives include:

- **Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs in the UK, IKS in Sweden)**, which are a novel financing mechanism to encourage more learning by adults through decreasing the cost of agreed learning, hence making learning more accessible, facilitating productivity and enabling retraining

and career moves. In addition, ILAs and related schemes hope to encourage personal responsibility in human capital accumulation and career development. Early evaluations of the UK system centre on the efficacy of its operation and the shape of future schemes. Pilot schemes had aimed to initiate the opening of 5,000 accounts, but achieved less than 3,500, with particular challenges in reaching non-traditional learners. There was evidence that the £25 required to open an account proved a barrier to some, and that pilot schemes had not embedded the concept of saving to learn. Dead-weight appeared to be high, with a possibility of rising further in response to higher targets being set. The participation of partner organisations was found to be vital to access groups of individuals who may not otherwise take up the accounts. However, it was reported to be too early in the scheme to draw definite conclusions of its effectiveness (DfEE, 1999c). Further evidence of the role of partner organisations comes from an evaluation of the ADAPT-funded TUC Learning Services Project (Cowen *et al.*, 2000); it found that the Union learning representatives had a 'critical role' in promoting ILAs to non-learners.

After external evaluation, Gloucestershire ILA pilot was deemed to be a success as it increased the number of people involved in learning; they took responsibility for making choices about their learning and saved to pay for it. The evaluation highlighted issues such as savings accounts as appropriate mechanisms of saving, cost effectiveness for financial institutions, and long-term sustainability, which need to be addressed for ILAs to become a viable long-term training investment option (Cheesman, 2000). A national scheme was launched in England in September 2000 and is currently being evaluated. The scheme provides for a series of incentives including:

- a contribution of £150 for account holders to book eligible learning, providing they contribute £25
- a 20 per cent discount off a wide range of learning opportunities, subject to an upper limit
- a discount of 80 per cent off the cost of specific maths and IT courses, subject to some restrictions
- additional tax and national insurance reliefs.

- **Individual Development Accounts, IDAs (USA & Canada),** which have been in operation for longer than UK or Swedish schemes. They are more broadly conceived than ILAs but based on the same principles, *ie* are aimed at sections of the population that do not normally participate in training activities. Twenty-six states currently run IDA schemes, with 300 IDA community programmes in operation. They have mainly emerged at a local or state level. IDAs are matched savings accounts designed to enable lower income households

to build assets. Funds can be used for education and training, starting small businesses, homeownership *etc.* In principle IDAs could be applied to higher income households, with subsidies at a lower level. Preliminary evaluation results of 14 programmes show that of the 1,326 accounts holders, 90 per cent were living significantly below the poverty line. They tended to be disadvantaged in terms of gender, ethnicity and marital status but not in terms of education, employment and use of banks. Participants were saving into their accounts actively although whether this was new behaviour or they were transferring savings from elsewhere could not be determined. More generally, one impediment to saving by the poor is that they are often outside the mainstream banking system. Hence measures such as the US EFT 99 (Electronic Funds Transfer 99) programme are aimed at promoting greater financial inclusion (Verry, 2000).

- **Voucher Schemes**, which have similarities to ILAs, comprising of government subsidy to be spent on approved educational services. We have not found any voucher schemes operating in the world at present. Potential for fraud is high (ILAs hope to avoid this by directing payment straight to the training/education provider). Despite previous difficulties, in Japan there has been recent interest in vouchers for information technology training. The scheme has already been criticised as being ill-conceived, not least because the sums on offer (about $55) are too small to pay for serious training (Verry, 2000).

- **The Act on Allocation of Financial Support to Folkeoplysning (Denmark)**. 'Folkeoplysning' is a Danish idea or concept of cultural, liberal education which also encompasses attendance, companionship and personal development. It is delivered through 104 Folk High schools in Denmark, which are virtually all boarding schools. Some are general, others are specialist or are politically or religiously orientated. They are used by all sections of the population, totalling around 60,000 stays of up to six months each year (two per cent of the adult population), although shorter courses are becoming more popular. They are all free and have no examinations or certificates. Under the Act, all people in Denmark have the opportunity of improving themselves in almost anything – very few topics are explicitly excepted from support, hence the state makes annual grants to the support of liberal education (Danish Ministry of Education, 1997).

3.4 More flexible provision

Flexible learning, includes such methods as open and distance learning, accreditation of prior learning and transfer options. Flexible learning initiatives may at first appear to be supply-side

measures, however, they have the potential to impact on the demand for learning. This section concentrates on the systems, policies and practices which are, or may be, helping to promote demand of adult learning through a more flexible supply.

3.4.1 Policies to promote learning in Finland

The Finnish policy approach aims to develop education according to the principles of lifelong learning (OECD, 2000a). For example, an unusual degree of freedom is offered to students nearing the end of the secondary system. They can apply to study in other municipalities and in different areas of the country; they can study at a vocational school and an upper secondary school (academically orientated) simultaneously. A modular and non-graded curriculum has also been introduced. Pilots have shown that 25 per cent of students took advantage of such opportunities. However, flexibility will be more difficult to maintain in sparsely populated areas of the country.

Across education in general, less reliance is placed on institution-centred learning, instead, learning encompassing all forms, environments, and all ages. Flexible learning is promoted through the following policies:

- upper secondary distance learning courses – students register with a local school but follow lessons broadcast by radio, and can receive counselling and guidance via the Internet
- increased on-the-job learning – based on the belief that education that is more relevant will increase motivation to learn
- increased emphasis on work experience components – since 1999 all three year vocational courses have had to offer six months work experience to every student. One of the aims of this policy is to increase motivation to learn through greater relevance and interaction between learning and the workplace. However, the scale of placement provision which this initiative requires is judged to be ambitious, and hard to achieve in areas of the country where there are relatively few employers. Scope to find work experience in other areas of Finland or abroad may help to some extent
- polytechnics being instructed by government to recruit one-third of their intake from vocational courses – it is hoped that the prospect of vocational courses acting as routes to HE may increase demand for both pre-HE and HE-level learning
- enhancing student self-esteem – through offering students in the post-compulsory sector more freedom in what, when and where they study. Providing flexibility in the education system is seen by some to be the most effective way of preventing drop-out

- promotion of information and communications technology – to provide more flexible learning options, and increase motivation through enjoyment and relevance of learning. The government's Information Society Programme, regarded as a key policy priority, aims to equip Finns with the basic skills and knowledge to understand ICT and to use it as a tool in learning at work and in their free time. There are also strategies in place to ensure that both men and women have equal opportunities in this.

Research carried out in the US suggests that these policies, based on increased choice, together with financial, and advice and counselling, are laying solid foundations for lifelong learning. However, the specific initiatives outlined have not been subjected to rigorous evaluation. This is due to their being too recent, there being too many overlapping initiatives taking place, and a new evaluation system currently being introduced (OECD 2000a; Numminen, 2000).

3.4.2 Sweden

Sweden has four initiatives to integrate lifelong learning into the system. One is the Adult Education Initiative (outlined in Chapter 4), another is an initiative looking at improving advanced vocational education. The remaining two have relevance to flexible learning:

- distance learning – a task force has been set up to develop new methods of learning and support, *eg* a catalogue of distance learning resources, development of web resources, and updating models of distance learning to suit different styles of student learning
- validation of the knowledge and skills of adults – three pilot projects with the eventual aim of enabling all interested adults to have their vocational skills and knowledge validated in a transparent and systematic way (Eurydice, 2000).

3.4.3 Spain

Training and education programmes for adults in Spain are broad and varied, with either face-to-face or distance learning methods available. Distance education includes basic school certificates, specific distance vocational training, and university entrance examinations for those over age 25 without the necessary qualifications for university entrance. Learning languages is also strongly encouraged through official distance teaching of the English language. The 'That's English' programme, which started in 1993/94, can be followed by anyone over age 18. A similar course for teaching French is now planned (Eurydice, 2000).

3.4.4 Italy

Integrated Higher Vocational Education and Training (IFTS) is a new integrated adult education system provided by a combination of providers at all levels from school to university. It aims to review and broaden opportunities and promote access to adult education and vocational training. It enables young graduates to acquire workplace skills, adults in work to upgrade their skills and experience whilst encouraging the right to education and training through life, and adults without work to train in order to find new opportunities, *eg* self-employment. Courses last between two and four semesters and include work placements, and accompanying support measures. In addition, the following initiatives to promote the right to education are being introduced:

- the right to paid study leave
- experimental introduction of a sabbatical year
- entitlement and study benefits
- guaranteed loans
- individual training accounts (Eurydice, 2000).

3.4.5 Austria

Course materials for web-based open and distance learning are being developed in Austria, under the EU Adapt Initiative. It aims to help increase participation rates, through flexible provision; *ie* developing materials for entry level courses in business administration and electronic data processing (Eurydice, 2000).

3.4.6 Australia

Open Learning Australia offers courses from a number of universities by distance education, payable by a HECS, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme – a deferred payment scheme option (www.ala.asn.au/).

3.4.7 New Zealand

New Zealand's Qualification Framework recognises prior learning that meets approved standards. These ensure that individuals have mastered the identified skills or competencies (Verry, 2000).

3.4.8 Ireland

Ireland's Qualifications Authority facilitates access, progression, transfer and mobility. Possible effects of these policies are to reduce overall study time required (Verry, 2000).

3.4.9 UK

A range of initiatives exists within the UK to encourage wider participation in learning at further and higher education level. In addition measures like the **University for Industry** are designed to improve access to distance learning through new technology.

- **The Wales Digital College (UK)**. The college is an ICT-based broker and provider of learning, which aims to widen participation in adult learning through using 'exciting and effective access procedures', supported by the EU's ADAPT initiative. No participation figures were available to test whether this had been achieved. The college has concentrated its marketing on staging a conference, a promotional leaflet, and launching a website. There has been criticism of the methods for tapping into demand, through supply-side measures, rather than stimulating it (Williams *et al.*, 2000).

3.5 Conclusion

Initiatives to stimulate mass demand uncovered by our search were mainly in the UK. Adult Learners' Week and the activities of the Campaign for Learning were good examples, each involving a variety of approaches including promotion through the media, advertising and themed days such as 'Learning at Work Day'. A more recent initiative is the University for Industry, focusing on promoting and providing easier access to learning opportunities through information and communication technologies. These initiatives had been subject to limited evaluation, due to their fragmented nature or their recency. From the evaluation evidence that does exist, we have some indication of the extent to which the initiatives were reaching their target groups. However, they provided little information in terms of how effectively they were stimulating demand for learning. Nonetheless, mass media campaigns in particular appear to hold considerable scope for developing demand in the future, due to their effectiveness in reaching those less likely to be enticed by more traditional means. In addition, there is scope to target particular target groups, *eg* via radio.

Information, advice and guidance initiatives were found in the UK, the USA and across Europe. They included web-based resources, a telephone helpline, and outreach approach, where information desks were set up in busy places, in addition to more traditional forms. The UK initiatives had been subject to some initial evaluation. The Information, Advice and Guidance evaluation indicated that the service was helping to promote a more strategic approach; a promising start. The learndirect evaluation dealt with efficiency of initial operation, rather than effectiveness of the service in increasing interest in learning. At this stage, it seems that learndirect in its present form will be more successful as an information provider, *ie* in helping people who

already have the inclination to learn and have some idea of direction, rather than stimulating demand in those who are as yet uncommitted, or need guidance. The American web-based services would seem to have similar strengths and weaknesses. They can provide information to those who already have some commitment to learning, but are unlikely to stimulate demand if not supported by other initiatives aimed at increasing participation of disengaged groups. The Guidance Centre Experiments in Denmark provide one of the most interesting examples in this section. Due to their newness, no evaluative evidence was available, but their visibility in the community and the ease of access to their services do hold potential to be an appropriate mechanism for both stimulating demand amongst non-learners, and also in providing appropriate advice as a result of a new qualification for advisers.

In the case of funding routes, Individual Learning Accounts, versions of which were found in the UK, Europe and the USA, had also been subject to some evaluation. In the UK it was found that they were meeting some of the objectives of the scheme, but that dead-weight was high. In the US, Individual Development Account participants were not found to be disadvantaged in terms of previous educational experience. This is one of the most important factors in participation in learning (see Section 2.2). Hence, for all their other successes, including engaging very high proportions of people on low incomes, and those from minority ethnic groups, IDAs are less successful in reaching those who are least likely to learn – *ie* those disadvantaged in terms of previous educational experience. More efforts will be needed to ensure these mechanisms reach such target groups if they are to succeed in stimulating demand in the long term.

We found examples of flexible learning in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Finland in particular has a wide range of policies based on increased learner choice through distance learning, increased work-related education and training, greater esteem for vocational courses, and an emphasis on ICT. American research suggests that such measures will help to promote lifelong learning. As discussed in Section 2.2, a positive early educational experience is one of the key factors in predicting future learning activity. Intuitively then, these policies should help to stimulate demand for learning in the long term. The difficulty in their evaluation is that they will take decades rather than months or years to show whether they have been successful in stimulating demand for learning throughout life.

More evaluation is needed in all of these areas, and it needs to consider user-outcomes over a longer time period, in addition to short-term operational factors. Of course, evaluations of this type are usually more costly, and can be fraught with difficulties, *eg* how can the effects of one initiative be separated out from all other influences? But we need some more definitive evidence of

the effects of initiatives on learners themselves, before we are able to conclude which initiatives work best, and which are less effective.

4. Initiatives Targeted at Individuals and Communities

The largest collection of initiatives we identified is aimed at stimulating learning among particular groups of individuals not actively engaged in learning. Many of these initiatives are aimed at improving the retention of young people in education, either by preventing them from becoming disenchanted with learning or seeking to re-engage them quickly. Other key groups include the unemployed, where learning is seen as a route to enhanced employability, and women, *eg* those seeking to return to learning or employment after a period of caring at home.

Two other groups of initiatives have been identified:

- those seeking to tackle specific skill issues – whether the target participants are in or out of the labour market
- initiatives aimed at particular communities where participation is difficult or at a low level. These initiatives in particular tend to be local or small scale, resource intensive, with a need to tailor services to the requirements of particular participants.

4.1 Initiatives aimed at non-learners

The main target groups of people not engaged in learning or potential non-learners comprise:

- young people
- women
- the unemployed
- those at risk from unemployment
- older people.

4.1.1 Young people

Of all the initiatives aimed at non-learners, the most comprehensive and widespread are those aimed at young people. As we found in Chapter 2, one of the most significant factors in

the decision to participate in adult learning is a positive prior experience of learning. Those who have a negative experience of school and leave at the earliest opportunity are unlikely to return to learning again, and once they have dropped out it becomes very hard to reach them by conventional methods (Brooks, 1998; Belanger and Tuijnman, 1997). It follows from this that by preventing young people from leaving the education system they can be helped to become lifelong learners, and indeed, preventing disillusionment and drop-out amongst young people has become a strong policy priority, in stimulating current and ensuring future demand for learning.

Research in Denmark showed that those who succeed in lower secondary education were likely to progress to some form of further education, even when from poorly educated and lower income families. This suggested that lifelong learning strategies should be aimed at primary and lower secondary education, in addition to strategies for adults (OECD, 2000a). In response, Denmark has introduced a national package of measures to increase participation and enthusiasm for learning amongst young people. Norway also introduced national educational reforms which impacted strongly on young people and their educational rights.

Other countries have introduced specific programmes, *eg* Ireland's YOUTHREACH, or funding incentives such as AUSTUDY in Australia and the Education Maintenance Allowances currently being piloted in the UK. However, there are also much smaller initiatives, targeted at the most disadvantaged young people, for example the Foyer Federation, and the Prince's Trust in the UK.

The initiatives generally comprise some combination of:

- flexibility in provision – allowing learners to try options and find routes that interest and suit them
- advice and guidance – to help young people make appropriate decisions
- funding – providing free provision and, occasionally, maintenance allowances or social security benefits.

Education and Training for All (Denmark)

This action programme aims to encourage youth education launched in 1993, on the back of a huge drop in participation. It includes the following initiatives.

- **Bridge-building courses to education** – are offered to all young people under age 19 who complete their 9th form but are not sure of their next direction. The courses combine teaching and guidance, and young people have the

opportunity to try out educational possibilities in practice before making their choice.

- **Vocational basic training** – is an alternative to traditional youth education programmes. It uses a combination of theoretical and practical work to try to motivate young people to get started with their education, or to improve their employability. The course lasts two years and includes an individual training plan.
- **The Production schools** – offer vocational preparation courses and guidance directed at young people under the age of 25 who have not completed a youth education programme.
- **Open Youth education**. The Open Youth Scheme can be viewed as a preventive strategy, designed to develop taking responsibility for own learning, self-direction and self-organisation. It is aimed at young people and adults who are not attracted by more traditional programmes of education. Students compose their own learning routes from a variety of courses, helped by an authorised guidance counsellor. The programme lasts two years during which students are connected to a registered institution and supported by a counsellor. A survey showed that only 30 per cent of the participants would have pursued another form of education if this programme had not been available. (OECD, 2000a). The scheme has been successful in engaging young people in education; during the 1990s, drop-outs were reduced by 50 per cent, although there have been two different costs as a result. Firstly, due to increasing flexibility, young people are now spending longer in the youth education system. Secondly, the funds directed towards low achievers have been at the expense of existing vocational programmes, hence non-beneficiaries maybe worse off than they were before the introduction of the programme (Nielson, 2000; Danish Ministry for Education, 1997).

Other general initiatives targeted at young people

- **Reform 94 (Norway)** merged general education and vocational training, and gave all 16-19 year olds the right to three years of upper secondary education, which could include vocational qualifications or a general pathway qualifying them for HE. Reform 94 programmes require the use of ICT, and have established a follow-up service for drop-outs. This service contacts all those who fail to apply, as well as those who drop-out. In 1998/99 seven per cent of those entitled to upper secondary education were in contact with the follow-up service. Reform 94 has brought about structural and organisational innovations. Evaluations took place from 1994 to 1998, and have indicated that Norway has been able to halt the decline in young people's recruitment to vocational courses overall, with 30-40 per cent progressing on to HE.

There is also evidence that students have more opportunities to exercise responsibility, self-reliance, independence and self-confidence – all pre-conditions for motivation and learning. In the thematic review of the transition from initial education to working life, the OECD described the reforms as a striking example of a national reform, both comprehensive and integrated, a model from which other countries might learn (OECD, 2000a; Andersen, 2000).

- **AUSTUDY (Australia)** was introduced in 1986/87; AUSTUDY provides income support arrangements resulting in a dramatic increase in the amount of benefit available to full-time students in the final two years of secondary school, together with a decrease in benefits for unemployed teenagers. The AUSTUDY benefit is paid on the basis of a means test on parents' income, which also takes the number of children in the family into account. The money is paid directly to the young person rather than to parents. There is also a limit on the amount the young person can earn from part-time work before the payments are reduced. Results show that AUSTUDY has contributed to an increase in retention rates since its introduction. In particular it has led to an increase of nearly four per cent over 1987-1993 by young people from less financially privileged backgrounds, as a direct result of AUSTUDY. (Proportions of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds staying in school past year 10 have increased overall from 45 per cent in 1984 to around 74 per cent in 1993.) Figures for 1997 showed that 50 per cent of school students over the age of 16 and 24 per cent of university students received AUSTUDY support (Borthwick, 1999). AUSTUDY is concluded to be a successful policy initiative which is contributing to a general trend in increased participation, and is particularly successful at targeting young people from lower income backgrounds (Dearden *et al.*, 1996; Borthwick, 1999).

- **YOUTHREACH (Ireland)** is the country's official response to the challenge of motivating young people who have left school with minimal qualifications and who are over 15. Some 7,000 places are available nationally on the programme, which is an out-of-school, integrated training and education, and work-experience programme, assisted by guidance, counselling, psychological service and childcare. An ESF evaluation report concluded that the most significant themes of the programme were 'responsibility, trust, choice and respect' thereby providing the first environment where these young people have been listened to. The programme is described as 'diverse and rich' with innovative responses to the challenges of integrating new technology into the informal education sector. An example of Youthreach at a local level is **The Hi-w@y internet café in the town of Navan,** part-funded by the EU programme, which focuses on early school leavers at risk of exclusion from the knowledge society. Young people run an internet café and serve snacks and drinks to the general public,

which boosts confidence, *eg* when helping customers to send email messages to family members abroad. Many of the participants have gained IT skills and secretarial knowledge in demand by local employers. Three of the female participants were studying to become IT teachers to pass on their new skills to other trainees and to local schools (Eurydice, 2000; OECD, 2000a).

- **Full Service Schools programme (Australia)** provides additional support for schools to develop innovative projects and services to address the needs of students who are at risk of not completing Year 12 or are unlikely to progress from school to further education, training or employment. Interim evaluations demonstrated that the programmes had impacted positively on the retention and return to school and transition of a significant group of young people. At this time many of the projects had not been running for long, but displayed creativity and the capacity for responding to those 'at risk'. The final evaluation is currently being made (www.ala.asn.au/).

- **Youthstart (UK)** is a European Commission supported programme that aims to ensure that young people aged 17-19 get the education and training they need. It targets those who are severely disadvantaged using a programme of job seeking and social skills. There have been over 50 projects in Great Britain, each of which had at least two other partners from other member states. The project is 'very successful' with partnership being cited as crucial (DfEE, 1997).

- **Double Take project (UK)** is run by Warwickshire Careers Service, aimed at young people aged 15-24 not accessing mainstream education, training or employment. The project aimed to contact people lost to the system and respond to their individual needs with a co-ordinated agency approach. It found lack of guidance rather than lack of motivation to be the key problem (DfEE, 1997).

- **Study Right (New Zealand)** is a policy providing universities and tertiary education providers with larger tuition subsidies to students who enrolled for the first time and were under age 22. The policy has been reconsidered as it resulted in lower levels of funding for some institutions serving target populations. A further proposal, not taken up, was to provide subsidy after a break in study (OECD, 2000b).

Providing financial assistance

Some schemes seek to encourage young people to return or stay in education by providing them with maintenance payments, to reduce the lure of the pay packet. For example:

- **The Youth Allowance (Australia)**, introduced in 1998, is intended to remove financial disincentives to education and

training. Young people under the age of 25 qualify for the Youth Allowance Scheme, while since 1998, those over age 25 qualify for the AUSTUDY payment. It is means tested, but those needing to live away from home may be able to receive rent assistance. Young people may opt to convert their allowance to double the amount in the form of a loan under the Student Financial Supplement Loans scheme, which is payable on an income contingent basis (Borthwick, 1999).

- **Education Maintenance Allowances (UK)** are currently being piloted in 15 LEAs in twelve regions. Means tested allowances are payable to individuals staying on at school beyond the age of 16. The initiative is based on the assertion that those who leave school earliest are generally the least qualified and least likely to return to learning later in life (Verry, 2000).

Targeted assistance

Particular groups of young people, *eg* the unemployed (see below) or the homeless, are the focus of a number of schemes, for instance:

- **Prince's Trust Action Initiative (UK)** – aims to inspire the most disadvantaged young people to develop themselves and serve the community. Measures include grants, study support, training and confidence building. 'Recharge' brings together about 600 long-term unemployed 18-25 year olds and offers a range of workshops in job finding, social and vocational skills. The right partnerships have been key to the success of the Prince's Trust Initiatives (DfEE, 1997).
- **The Foyer Federation (UK)** – provides affordable accommodation with training and employment opportunities to homeless young people. 1,838 people went through the Foyers in the evaluation period (1993-95). During this time, 325 people were placed in training and a further 736 went into employment (DfEE, 1997). An evaluation which compared Foyers to other, similar, schemes found that the Foyers placed a greater emphasis than other schemes on vocational skills and qualifications. Whilst the achievement of qualifications was fairly low, the scheme did have some success in increasing clients' self-reliance in the labour market (Maginn *et al.*, 2000).

4.1.2 Women

Initiatives aimed specifically at women tend to be small in scale, and locally based which may be why we mostly found them in the UK.

Some initiatives aim to re-integrate women through outreach methods, raising their expectations to include the possibility of learning, and then providing education opportunities. Other locally based schemes concentrate on trying to help women back

into employment, with education being a means to that end. Family commitments, most usually childcare, are a major barrier to women returning to learning. Hence most of the initiatives had some provision for childcare, or at least were flexible enough to allow women to fit their involvement around caring responsibilities. At the other end of the scale, a short slot promoting women's learning opportunities on a daytime magazine show on TV is a more general approach, which was extremely successful in stimulating the interest in learning.

Example initiatives include:

- **'New Opportunities for Women' TV promotion (UK)** – a six-part series comprising short slots on education for women, on the magazine programme 'This Morning'. It generated a huge response, mostly from women who had left school without formal qualifications (Sargant and Tuckett, 1997).
- **Women's Education Initiative (Ireland)** – 13 projects aiming to build local capacity, develop support structures, accredit women's learning and encourage partnerships and collaboration between voluntary and statutory organisations (Eurydice, 2000).
- **YWCA programme, Northolt (UK)** – a small scheme in Northolt, which aims to make young mothers aware of training and employment opportunities. It organises work placements and provides a crèche. It has enabled several mothers to enter FE or find employment. A DfEE evaluation found that 40 per cent of parents using an after-school club had improved their employment prospects (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).
- **Cut, Advice and Blow-Dry (UK)** – run by Rycotewood College, used stylists at the local hairdressers to encourage women to consider returning to learning, pointing them to guidance and learning opportunities in the area. This small pilot study was reputed to have been successful, but there was no other indication of scope or effects (Tuckett, 1997).
- **Integration of Senior Citizens in Society Home Care Service Programme (Belgium, Flanders)** – a programme to increase the skills of people not already in employment and encourage them to take on roles of caring for the elderly when and where the established professional services could not provide service, *eg* during the night and in the holidays. Women participating in the first wave were aged between 30 and 50, seeking a route back to work. Job opportunities as home care workers were offered to people with no specific nursing or medical background. Each worker had a social worker as a supervisor who gave individual coaching twice a month. Nine out of ten recruited have remained in their posts. Flexible arrangements have made it easier for women to balance home/family and work responsibilities. The women viewed the on-going

coaching and peer support as key to the success of the programme (OECD, 1999).

- **Linking unemployed women with employment opportunities (UK)** – a small-scale course with only 16 participants which ran in Birmingham in 1991. It involved group sessions, guidance, discussion and recording of skills, links with and visits to local employers, sessions on accreditation of prior learning and on NVQs. Some participants went on to seek and gain employment immediately afterwards, and over half of the participants initiated some form of continuing learning or training as a result. Key factors of success were judged to be: recruitment by personal contacts from existing community networks, tailoring the process to suit women's time and domestic constraints, and providing childcare. The project highlighted the inadequacy of formal education and training courses' timetables for women caring for families. The project also had broad aims and an open-ended nature, minimising the pressure on the participants to achieve a definite outcome by its end (McGivney, 1992).

4.1.3 The unemployed

There are measures to help the unemployed into learning and training in many countries across Europe. The most common are national policies providing opportunities or obligations to enter training, rather than just receiving benefits. Unsurprisingly, a common thread to the initiatives in this group is their concern with improving employability, and so they tend to promote vocational routes. Some are quite broad, with elements targeted at the unemployed within them, for example, Sweden's Adult Education Initiative. Others, like the UK's New Deal are specifically for the unemployed, and provide a range of measures for various target groups such as the long-term unemployed, lone parents, or young people, to enable them to undertake work-related training. The VTOS scheme in Ireland specifically targets the long-term unemployed, and attempts to reach the most disadvantaged. Some schemes (the Netherlands and UK) have provided opportunities for very vocational training, through offering work-based learning, or by providing a guaranteed job at the end of training.

Adult Education Initiative (Sweden)

The Adult Education Initiative (AEI) is the most important adult education programme at present in Sweden. A five-year programme, which commenced in 1997, it has four perspectives involving renewal of adult education, labour market policy, equity, and growth. One of its targets is the unemployed, who have access to education in the first instance, not unemployment benefits. The level of study grants corresponds to unemployment

benefits. Study is financed by 'Svuxa', a specific study support for unemployed consisting of a grant and a loan component (Sweden National Authorities, 1998).

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) (Ireland)

VTOS offers second-chance education and training for those over 21 who have been in receipt of unemployment payments for at least six months, or who are entitled to lone parent's allowance, or disability payment. Participants receive a training allowance in lieu of social welfare entitlements, and travel and meals allowances are also paid. The programme offers education and vocational options, focusing on new-technology skills, vocational skills, enterprise training, personal development and general studies. Courses cover basic education, Leaving Certificate and FE. The programme has been funded with aid from the ESF since its inception in 1989. It has been expanded from the pilot, and now offers 5,000 places per year. In 1997 73 per cent of its graduates progressed to employment, further education, or training. Difficulties have been attracting the seriously disadvantaged to take an interest in the VTOS centres, although once they do they are happy to stay on the programme. *Eg* **VTOS in Galway**, where efforts were made to attract the seriously disadvantaged through leaflet distribution, church announcements, local radio, setting up desks in social welfare offices, developing links with other training providers and employment services, and using past participants to encourage others to join. These efforts were successful, but addressing this problem is an on-going struggle. An ESF evaluation highlighted the need for part-time and flexible courses, and for better guidance and counselling services (OECD, 2000a).

Job guarantees after training (the Netherlands)

A scheme running in the late 1980s in Holland was based on the belief that a guaranteed job at the end of a short period of training will attract the target groups least likely to enter training. The scheme used ESF funds to develop and carry out training programmes tailored to specific job and industry requirements, in addition to multi-skill training. Guaranteed jobs are the key factor to participation, and industry also contributes to the costs of the scheme in return for input into the programmes. However, participants are required to have good physical and mental health, a fixed income and good accommodation, excluding the most disadvantaged (McGivney, 1992).

The New Deal (UK)

The New Deal provides a package of measures for the unemployed (DfEE, 1999c):

- **For young people** – opportunities for 18-24 year olds to train towards a recognised qualification, *eg* NVQ level 2, either through the full-time education and training option, or by training part-time for six months while in one of the other three options. Over 42,000 people have joined the education and training option.
- **For the long-term unemployed** – opportunities for those over the age of 25 to gain a recognised qualification, *eg* NVQ level 3, through full-time courses or work-based learning.
- **For lone parents** – financial assistance for lone parents to take external work-related training of up to 12 months, for qualifications up to level 2 or 3.
- **For people on income replacement benefits over the age of 50** – currently being developed, will offer provision for skills improvements similar to the other New Deals.

Work-based learning for adults (UK) – voluntary scheme for over 25s, most of whom will have claimed Job Seekers Allowance for six months or more. Targets for 1999 were to help 116,000 people. Participants can do occupational skills training (employer-based learning and NVQ provision) or basic employability training, for those who need motivation, confidence basic skills *etc*. 35,000 basic employability starts were planned in 1999-2000 with 40,000 planned in 2000-2001. Programme length averages seven months and costs are about £3,800 per person (DfEE, 1999c).

Work foundations (Austria)

Foundations have been set up in the wake of redundancies at one or more enterprises by employers and/or local and regional authorities. They provide vocational and continuing education and training, and re-integrate dismissed employees into working life. The Steel Foundation, established in 1987, was the first work foundation in Austria. 30 to 50 per cent of dismissed employees join a work foundation, for an average of 8-12 months (far short of the maximum four year-period). Costs are 1.2 to 1.5 million ATS a year, per 100 participants. In 1995 there were 54 work foundations which helped 3,709 people (64 per cent were men). By November 1998 there were 86 foundations in existence (Ofner and Wimmer, 1998).

4.1.4 Those at risk from unemployment

Initiatives targeted at those at risk from redundancy are rarer. Examples were found in Austria and Belgium, one of which was a national fund to assist in the general re-training of workers facing unemployment, whereas the other was a smaller scheme providing workers facing redundancy with fairly basic skills, to enable them to keep pace with technological change in their organisation. In addition the ADAPT initiative by the ESF has

funded a wide variety of projects across the EU aimed at retraining people under threat of redundancy.

- **Viennese Employees' Promotion Fund (Austria)** – a fund intended for those threatened by unemployment to give them the opportunity to do vocational education and training. It includes measures to promote the establishment of small firms (Ofner and Wimmer, 1998).
- **Duracell battery initiative (Belgium)** – a workplace basic education project for low-schooled factory workers at risk of unemployment, in Aarschot, Belgium. Following a take-over in 1995, re-organisation and restructure threatened the jobs of most of the low-skilled workers at the Aarschot plant unless they re-trained for the high-skilled jobs required by the new production systems. A partnership between the private sector HR Departments (Duracell, Vignon and Bosch) and the public sector (Hageland Basic Education Centre) developed a training programme as a preventive measure designed to stop the target group from slipping into exclusion. The programme took four hours each week for ten weeks, including basic skills in numeracy and workplace literacy, professional and social skills, quality control, computing, communications, problem solving and teamwork. Workers who had retrained on this programme showed greater enthusiasm and self-motivation, improved work opportunities and increased flexibility and mobility around the factory. They were able to do their jobs with much more insight and understanding, and to work better as part of a team. Workers also commented that as a result of this initial training they were committed to continuing in future learning activities (OECD, 1999).

4.1.5 Older people

Relatively few initiatives appear to be targeted at older people. In the UK, an element of the New Deal is aimed specifically at unemployed people aged over 50.

The New Deal 50plus (UK) provides a training grant of up to £750 for those on the scheme who qualify for the Employment Credit wage top-up. This grant can be used for training which is relevant to current employment or will increase future employability. The programme was launched nationally in April 2000 and in the first six months 22,000 had gained employment and were receiving the Employment Credit. IES is currently undertaking a national evaluation of the scheme. Early results indicate that the understanding and take-up of the training grant have been disappointing, although this may improve as the programme progresses (Atkinson *et al.*, 2000a, 2000b).

Pensioner Education Supplement (Australia) offers an additional payment to recipients of income support, and is available for full

and part-time study and can be converted into a supplementary loan (Borthwick, 1999).

4.2 Skill deficit initiatives

Some initiatives are aimed at raising skill attainment in specific areas. The most common targets are:

- basic skills
- ICT skills.

Getting people who lack basic skills to recognise their learning need can be difficult and a range of measures are or have been tried to tackle the problem. In the UK a range of initiatives have been launched since the Moser Report in 1999 cast fresh attention on the issue and the government established a Basic Skills strategy in 2000. However, it is too early to say anything conclusive about the results.

Initiatives to stimulate demand for basic skills include media-based promotion of national literacy policies, *eg* Ireland's National Literacy Initiative, the BBC's literacy campaign 'On the Move' in the UK during the 1970s or more subtle efforts such as the Brookie Basics based around the programme Brookside in the 1990s. More common are initiatives which run at a local level, either through general initiatives such as the Adult and Community Learning Fund, or more targeted efforts including the Family Literacy and Numeracy programme in the UK. Alternative approaches are employer-related basic skills initiatives, of which two examples were found in the UK. Finally, a project in Birmingham uses accessibility, through a multi-site approach, together with technology to draw in the target groups.

Amongst initiatives to stimulate demand for ICT skills, a BBC 'Computers Don't Bite' promotion proved successful during its lifetime. Longer-term schemes in the UK have centred around attracting learners through the promotion of local IT facilities and courses. Developing and sustaining IT skills is a policy priority across the USA; one state has introduced a tax credit for IT training, and it is likely that other states will follow.

4.2.1 Demand for learning basic skills

Examples of general promotional activity from the 1970s include:

- **'On the Move' Literacy Campaign** the first high profile mass media campaign learning campaign in the UK. It was mounted by the BBC in the early 1970s, with the aim of encouraging people with reading and writing problems to seek help. The approach involved a series of short sketches in peak viewing time, documentary witness programmes, and

authoritative discussions, all on BBC1. High-quality support materials and a telephone helpline were also provided as follow-ups. This campaign (together with an Adult Literacy Campaign co-ordinated by the British Association of Settlements at around the same time) transformed the demand for basic skills, which in turn led to an upsurge in their public provision. Numbers of students enrolled on basic skills programmes increased from 6,000 to 100,000 in a very short space of time. As importantly, On the Move was the first initiative that really established the power of television in motivating non-learning adults, and those with poor basic skills, to seek education and learning. It showed how a prime-time broadcasting initiative, together with local provision of services, could reveal a huge latent demand.

- **Make it Count, and Numbers at Work** – a series run by Yorkshire television in 1977 for people who found numbers hard to deal with. It was successful, although it did not achieve as large a response as the 'On the Move' Literacy Campaign. It has since been updated and extended by Channel Four, and was used in its new format for several years running. The audience, at 423,000 on the first showing, and 127,000 on the repeat, was small for television, but despite this, 40,000 people requested the workbook accompanying the series. Again, this demonstrates the power of television to reach those who would perhaps be hard to engage through more direct or conventional means.

More wide-ranging initiatives include:

- **Adult Literacy Service (Ireland)** – part of the National Literacy Initiative which also includes primary schools; investment has increased rapidly since small inception in 1997, with over 10,000 people using the service each year. Starting with 1:1 volunteer tutors, tuition progresses to small groups, with opportunities to achieve certification. Literacy programmes on the radio have been piloted, and a TV awareness and tuition programme has been commissioned (Eurydice, 2000).
- **Georgia's Literacy Campaign (US)** – a systematic county-by-county campaign to assess the literacy skills of adults, create an action plan to reach all sections of the community, and provide programme benchmarks (21st Century Workforce Commission, 2000).
- **Bilston Community College initiative (UK)** – supported by the Adult and Community Learning Fund (see also Section 4.3.2). This initiative aimed to reach as many as possible of those in the community who would benefit from basic skills support. Its method was to reject the more conventional views of basic skills and concentrated on assisting the community to confront issues such as high unemployment and the regeneration of local economies. Initial evaluations have found

that the key to community-based programmes is that they can reach out to individuals and groups not attracted to more traditional programmes and that they can avoid the stigma associated with formal education institutions (Brooks *et al.*, 2000).

- **Family literacy and numeracy programmes (UK)** – first demonstrated by the Basic Skills Agency. Now LEA funded, with retention and progression percentages close to those found in the original pilots in the early to mid-1990s (Brooks *et al.*, 2000).

More specific schemes include:

- **Family literacy scheme (UK)** – run by Ford of Dagenham. This scheme brought in a higher proportion of fathers than usual. It is not known how the events in the European car industry in 1999-2000 affected the scheme (Brooks *et al.*, 2000).
- **The Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership (UK)** – one of the best developed centres for basic skills using ICT, with 17 sites around the city, targeting adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners (Brooks *et al.*, 2000).

Increasingly, attention is being given to the use of new technology to tackle basic skills issues:

- **UfI Basic Skills in the workplace project (UK)** – this project suggested that the simplicity of the CD-ROM used, *ie*, no sound, few images, moving through tasks slowly, was a major factor in its popularity. In addition, the project team also concluded that effective learning does not follow from someone being put in front of the computer and being 'left to get on with it' (Brooks *et al.*, 2000).

4.2.2 Demand for learning ICT skills

As with basic skills, some initiatives attempt to raise demand for acquiring ICT skills through general promotional activity, *eg*:

- **The BBC's 'Computers Don't Bite' campaign (UK)** – this media campaign has shown that innovative forms of promotion can increase the demand for learning. However, the drawback of such schemes is that they tend to be short term (NAGCELL, 2000).
- **Webwise (UK)** – a BBC practical learning initiative. This online course leads to a nationally recognised qualification, *eg* City and Guilds, BTEC, CLAIT (www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/learn/index.shtml).

Others involve developing more flexible provision, including some of the 'e-learning' courses provided through learndirect in the UK and:

- **Silicon Valley Network (US)** – this network developed a strategic approach to high-tech education and continuous learning. New courses, varying lengths and multiple modes of delivery were marketed to adult career changers and IT professional requiring continuing education (21st Century Workforce Commission, 2000).

Some measures seek to promote ICT learning through subsidising participation. This is a feature of the current Individual Learning Accounts (see Section 3.3) promotion in the UK and:

Northern Valley Regional Partnership (US) – developed short-term training programmes to address IT skills shortages, and worked with the student loan funding organisation to create a low-interest loan program geared towards career-changing adults seeking to gain IT skills in short-term programmes (21st Century Workforce Commission, 2000).

IT skills training tax credit (US) – the State of Arizona is the first state to introduce such a tax credit, which could make it easier for businesses, especially SMEs, to invest in their employees skills development (21st Century Workforce Commission, 2000).

More generally:

- **Silver Surfers (UK)** – ICT can be one way of attracting those from disadvantaged groups to engage with learning. In this instance, a cyber café-style centre was opened by an IT company in a vacant flat on Woodberry Down, Hackney. All estate households were leafleted, word of mouth was also effective in maintaining recruitment. The good response led to a demand for more introductory courses, and to some people being prepared to travel further afield to continue their learning at a college in another part of Hackney. In return for using space in the over-60s club next door to the premises, the project provided an introduction to IT especially for the over-60s. These classes have proved very popular, with big demand and retention (DfEE, 1999c).

The provision of ICT skills training can also be a way of attracting people to acquire basic literacy or numeracy (see above).

4.3 Engaging communities

Community-based initiatives take two distinct paths. First, those focused on rural areas are primarily about improving access to learning provision. Secondly, those in inner cities tend to attempt to tackle a more fundamental problem centring around the lack of

motivation, although they still involve access-based initiatives. Thus in this section we distinguish between initiatives which are aimed at:

- overcoming geographical constraints, and
- motivating communities to learn.

4.3.1 Overcoming geographical constraints

Distance learning is characterised by learning most usually occurring in a different place from teaching. Due to the flexibility of location, it has the capacity to be an effective way of providing education to remote or disaffected communities that would not tend actively to seek out learning opportunities. ICT has been increasingly harnessed in order to reach particular groups and the general population, to increase their demand for learning, and their opportunities to learn. The Open University, a long-established and highly successful model of distance learning in the UK, has been adapted more recently resulting in the University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland, and the African Virtual University. On a much smaller scale, a vocational learning initiative has provided education by remote access to an isolated community in Sweden. Whether these technologies actually stimulate demand is questionable; however, they do have the potential to do so, since they remove barriers of access. The key in ensuring they do so lies in their effective promotion. Examples include:

- **The Open University (UK)** is a well-established example of distance learning. Two million people have benefited from HE at the OU since its establishment in 1969, and it has 200,000 current students. Age range, educational and socio-economic background are more heterogeneous than at conventional universities, and unit costs per graduate run at around one-third of a traditional university education. The possibility for lower unit cost is a major potential advantage of distance learning initiatives (Verry, 2000).
- **The University of the Highlands and Islands (Scotland)** is a partnership between local authorities, institutions and the private sector. The project aims to show existing colleges and institutions how they can adapt and use technologies to overcome people in more remote areas to access learning opportunities. It also aims to encourage more young people and mature students to study whilst remaining in this area of the country (Eurydice, 2000).
- **The Forestry Project Initiative (Sweden)** provides out-of-working hours distance learning, computer-based learning and interactive video facilities for shift workers in the forestry industry. It aims to overcome the shortage of upper secondary-level education and skills required to manage an

increasingly high-tech, automated production system. The project is part funded by government, with employers providing suitable ICT learning centres close to their factories, and for providing supervisors for these centres (Verry, 2000).

- **Electronic Village Halls (UK)** is a local initiative to address the problem of access to learning in rural communities, through open and distance learning, via links to the Internet. The University of Wolverhampton launched two sites in rural Shropshire communities (Tuckett, 1997).
- **The African Virtual University** is currently in its pilot stage. It uses interactive satellite and computer-based technologies to train scientists, technicians, engineers, healthcare workers *etc.* Like the Ufl, the AVU mainly buys in courses and facilities from existing high-quality educational institutions (including those in the USA, Canada and Ireland). Problems include lack of funds, outdated and scarce buildings and equipment, and lack of high-quality faculty, however, some of these problems can be addressed through using technology to overcome physical constraints (Verry, 2000).
- **The University for Industry** and **learndirect** in the UK (see Sections 3.1.6 and 3.2.1) also represent an attempt to overcome not only locational access issues, but temporal ones too – as they provide '24/7' all-round access to learning opportunities.

4.3.2 Motivating communities to learn

The majority of the initiatives aiming to motivate communities to learn were found in the UK, and were small in scale and locally targeted, often running as part of larger regeneration packages. They involved measures such as outreach, provision of familiar learning environments, and sometimes a lack of pressure to commit. Such initiatives do appear to introduce communities to learning; however, due to their intensive and specific nature, they have limited scope and are often costly. One example of a completely different type of programme ran in Leeds, and involved general interest courses being run in pubs, which during its life achieved new enthusiasm for learning by the community.

- **The Adult and Community Learning Fund (UK)** – a £20 million fund set up by the DfEE to support community-based organisations, and enable them to develop new learning opportunities for adults. Administered jointly by NIACE and the Basic Skills Agency, it is based on the government's belief that regeneration of disadvantaged areas is vital in creating a sustainable, civilised society. The Fund aims to attract 'hard-to-reach' adults who have been wary of education, and hence have not been reached by traditional educational organisations in the past. It provides opportunities relevant to its target groups, delivering them in innovative ways. The Fund is now in its final stages. Early lessons show that new and different

learners were being successfully reached, and that partnership approaches resulted in increased benefits. Projects which were isolated or not supported locally were more likely to fail (Hillage *et al.*, 2000; www.niace.org.uk/Funds/aclf/). (Also see Section 4.2.1 for an Adult and Community Learning Fund basic skills initiative.)

- **East Leeds Family Learning Centre (UK)** – this Centre helps the area's residents into education, training and employment by helping them improve their skills in a local, familiar setting. Free childcare is available for daytime courses. It offers key skills, labour market relevant programmes, and softer subjects like aromatherapy and gardening. It has been key to engage people's interests in learning through offering them something initially which fires their interest and gets them involved in the Centre's work. There is also a comprehensive advice and guidance service at the Centre (DfEE, 1999c; Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).
- **The Moss Side Initiative** – with £12 million funding, the project has provided a comprehensive social, housing, education, training and jobsearch programme for young people. It includes the Millennium Powerhouse – a multi-functional resource centre for leisure, IT, careers advice, study support, FE, training and business support *etc.* (DfEE, 1999c).
- **The Zion Centre Manchester (UK)** – aims to draw people into a learning environment at their own pace, *ie* gradually joining in with its activities, rather than going there deliberately to pursue a particular activity (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).
- **Ascent 21 (UK)** – an outreach/brokerage project in Hackney. The project worker has gained the confidence of the local community and helps them to think through their approach to employment and learning, through, *eg* 'constructive loitering' at school gates, or wherever people congregate. The project has also built strong recruitment links with London Underground (DfEE, 1999c).
- **Hackney Wick (UK)** – an eight-year project finishing in 2003/04, with total funding of almost 66 million, from public and private sector sources. Aims to equip people with the necessary skills and training to succeed, creating a sustainable community. One aim is to train 3,623 people to gain qualifications by the end of the scheme (DfEE, 1999c).
- **Heart of Hackney (UK)** – an initiative to provide sustainable development of the local economy. Has been running for six years and is due to end in 2001/02. Its total funding is over 116 million, and by the end of the scheme it aims to have trained 453 people to gain qualifications (DfEE, 1999c).
- **Inn Tuition/A pint and a prospectus please (UK)** – popular interest courses run in Leeds inner city pubs. Airdale and Wharfdale Colleges ran courses jointly with Tetley breweries

eg 'Ordering drinks abroad' and 'Local History', 'Fitness for stress management'. A small-scale, local initiative, which apparently engaged the interest of those in the community who had not previously considered learning (Tuckett, 1997).

- **Family Literacy Initiative (UK)** – led by the Basic Skills Agency (see above). One of the pilot projects involved producing a book of writing by black parents attending the project in Moss Side, Manchester. Pilot projects have 'recorded exceptional successes for parents and children' (Tuckett, 1997).

4.4 Conclusion

We found that initiatives aimed at stimulating demand for learning among young people were the most comprehensive and widespread. Many of these can be seen as preventative strategies, aiming to stimulate a demand for learning over the course of people's lifetimes, through keeping them in education for longer in the first place. The Open Youth Education programme in Denmark is one such initiative, which has achieved some success in engaging young people's interest in education, and in preventing drop-outs. The Reform 94 programme in Norway has also been seen as an exemplary national reform, providing pre-conditions for lifelong learning. Meanwhile, financial incentives (AUSTUDY) in Australia have proved effective in motivating young people to stay in education, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds. Other programmes in the UK and Australia aimed at preventing disengagement from learning in the first place have been successful within their remits, or early evaluations have indicated that positive outcomes are likely.

Initiatives aimed at women (all UK-based), ranged from a media promotion, which was successful in that it generated a huge response from its audience, to smaller, locally based, initiatives. Many were reported to have been successful in re-engaging women with learning opportunities, however, their intensive nature meant that their impact was often limited to very small numbers. We found initiatives to help the unemployed across Europe, including the UK, Sweden and Austria, but there was little evaluative evidence to indicate their success in stimulating demand for learning. The VTOS scheme in Ireland has achieved some positive outcomes, although reaching the most disadvantaged groups has been problematic. This is a theme running through many of the initiatives outlined in this chapter.

Initiatives to address skill deficits (basic skills and ICT), were found mainly in the UK and the US. Whilst not strictly an evaluation, the results of the UK basic skills media promotions during the 1970s highlighted the power of television to stimulate the demand for learning amongst large numbers of people who would not have been easily reached by more conventional means. The BBC's 'Computers Don't Bite' campaign reinforced this

message. Silver Surfers, a locally based ICT initiative in Hackney appeared to be successfully stimulating demand for learning amongst individuals in its catchment area. However, we found no evaluative evidence of demand for learning with regard to most of the other basic skills and ICT initiatives that we cite.

Whilst initiatives exist on both a small and large scale to engage communities to learn through overcoming geographical constraints, the evaluative evidence on their effectiveness appeared at present to be virtually non-existent. This is due to their recency, although the well-established Open University provides one exception to this. All initiatives aiming to motivate communities to learn were found in the UK – undoubtedly a reflection of their nature, rather than indicative that no others exist. Evaluation appears sparse, although lessons have certainly been learned, including the value of partnerships, and the need to provide an unpressured environment for potential learners.

There is some evidence to suggest that measures aimed at preventing the young from dropping out of education in the first place could be more effective in stimulating a demand for learning in the long term, than remedial measures aimed at re-engaging particular groups, such as the unemployed or older learners. This raises questions of where resources should be targeted for greatest effect and value for money, particularly when the higher unit costs involved in remedial measures are considered. However, even if there were conclusive evidence to suggest that preventive measures are both cheaper and more effective than remedial measures, this does not take into account the time lag which would be inherent in producing a population of lifelong learners. Decades would need to pass before the population consisted of those who had benefited from preventive measures. Hence a related question would need to be, how long can we wait? Firstly, we would require more conclusive evidence of the relative successes of each approach and the resources required to fund them. Then we would need to weigh up this evidence against the urgency of stimulating demand. A combined approach, comprising strategies which ensure sustained future demand, together with initiatives which impact on current demand for learning, may be an appropriate and socially responsible measure.

5. Stimulating Demand for Learning at Work

Although, as we saw in Chapter 2, people at work are far more likely to engage in learning activities than people not at work, participation in learning in the workplace is unevenly distributed. One set of factors revolves around the nature of the workplace itself – for instance its size and business activity, with smaller and simpler workplaces offering fewer learning opportunities than larger or more complex establishments. Another set of factors concerns the individual employee, with managers and professionals more likely to engage in learning than their less-skilled colleagues.

A range of initiatives spread across the UK, the US, Europe and Australia was found which tried to stimulate demand for learning at work, or employee learning away from the workplace.

- employer contributions – mainly obligatory
- tax incentives
- state funding
- time off for study
- partnerships.

The main policy instrument used to stimulate learning at work is to encourage (or compel) employers to fund training for their employees. In some countries (*eg* Canada and the Netherlands) employers are obliged by law either to spend a certain amount on training or contribute to a training fund. In some countries the contributions are voluntary (*eg* in the USA). An alternative, and in some countries complementary, strategy is for the state to subsidise training either through tax relief or direct funding. Tax relief provisions to stimulate employers to invest in training their employees were found in the USA, Canada and the Netherlands. The state provides funding for employees to learn in Sweden, and in the UK it provides funding for small businesses.

Initiatives enabling time off for study were found in several countries in Europe, most usually targeted at specific groups such as those with limited education. A problem with some of these is that whilst some funding is available for employees whilst they take time off for study, it is more likely to be at the level of

unemployment benefit than the salary they would otherwise be earning. Also, since time off work is often at the employer's discretion, there is no employee right to enforce access.

Another approach is to encourage unions and employers to work together to stimulate demand for learning among employees. Partnerships to promote learning through employers and trade unions working together were found in the UK in a number of forms, and in the USA to a more limited extent. In the Netherlands, a more specific example of a partnership providing learning opportunities was between an employment agency and its workers.

5.1 Employer contributions

A number of countries operate some form of training levy system generally involving employers contributing a sum of money, often related to the number of employees they have, into a pot, from which they can draw down the cost of training. It stimulates demand by encouraging employers to make the most of their contributions and limiting the potential negative impact for employers of 'poaching' whereby employers who do not train lure trained staff away from those that do.

The aim here is to get at employees through employers and reduce the influence of the cost of learning and the returns to learning as a constraint. However, as some of the limited evaluations suggest, such schemes do not necessarily tackle the crucial issue of the lower levels of training associated with smaller enterprises.

Examples include:

- **The Act to foster the development of manpower training (Canada)** – the Act was introduced in 1995 after the election of a new government in 1994, and replaced the Tax Training Credit (see 'Tax Incentives' above). It required every employer with an annual payroll of $250,000 and over to spend at least one per cent of their total payroll on training. Objectives were to improve manpower qualification and to generate increased investment in training through action by the main players in the labour market. Implicit objectives were to contribute to the development of a lifelong learning culture, and to define a different role of the state in relation to training in the workplace. It was implemented gradually and was fully in force by 1998, when eligible expenditures totalled more than $1 billion. Evaluation of the first five years of the Act is continuing. Preliminary data indicate that quantitatively there has been some success, and employers feel that the Act has more advantages than disadvantages. Areas for future improvements have been highlighted, including a need to allocate more resources in support of SMEs, *eg* support in

identifying their training needs and developing tools suited to their circumstances (Duranleau, 2000).

- **Sectoral levy system (the Netherlands)** – funds are contributed compulsorily by the employer (and sometimes also by the employee). Hence all firms in a sector contribute to the training fund, easing the risk of firms poaching trained workers from their competitors while not investing in training themselves. The OOM Fund in the Metalwork Industry, governed by the employers representative organisations and unions is an example of such a scheme. All employers in the sector must contribute 0.55 per cent of the firm's total wage bill to the fund. Workers have an hour's reduction scheme giving them a number of extra days off a year, some of which are used for training. Firms can receive subsidies from the fund for training courses run by other firms or by the sectoral training provider. Research by the OOM found that the measures appeared to be successful, although it may be proving hardest to reach the smallest firms (Baaijens *et al.*, 1998).
- **Labour Market Training Fund (Denmark)** – all employers contribute to a fund on a per capita basis for each full-time employee. They will then have the right to receive support from the fund when their employees participate in training courses (CEDEFOP website).
- **Training fund for employees (Ireland)** – introduced in the 1999 budget, based on a levy on some categories of employers. The fund replaces apprenticeship and training levies and will be directed in increasing the provision of apprenticeships and traineeships (Eurydice, 2000).
- **Tuition Accounts (USA)** – learning accounts (see Section 3.3) funded by employers rather than employees. They are administered by the Council on Adult and Experimental Learning (CAEL) which also advises employers on training needs and strategies. In the mid-1990s there were around 10,500 accounts held by individuals across the USA with an account balance of $1,000 a year (Verry, 2000).

5.2 Tax incentives

State subsidies to employers to encourage them to provide training generally take the form of tax rebates:

- **Tax Training Credit (Canada)** – this tax credit was introduced in 1991 with the purpose of encouraging employers to invest in training and develop a lifelong learning culture in the workplace. It allowed SMEs with assets of less than $25 million, or equity of less than $10 million, to recover 40 per cent of their eligible training expenses. Larger firms could recover 20 per cent of their expenses. This incentive did not produce the desired results, only $20 million of credits

were claimed in 1992, and the scheme was not reaching SMEs effectively. See also 'Obligatory Employer Contributions' below, for the scheme which replaced it (Duranleau, 2000).

- **Federal tax code (US)** – an exemption for employer-provided educational assistance. Without this, tuition assistance provided by the employer would be counted as taxable income. This tax provision appears to affect training decisions positively, especially for low and mid-level workers. However, this provision is temporary (21st Century Workforce Commission, 2000).
- **Tax facility for training employees (the Netherlands)** – since 1998, a structural subsidy has been available, which deducts money employers spend on training their employees, from the company profit liable to tax. There are related additional measures to target the facility most on small firms and older workers (Baaijens *et al.*, 1998).
- **Tax relief for employees (the Netherlands)** – individual learners working in the public sector can, within limits, deduct college and other related expenses from their personal income tax (Baaijens *et al.*, 1998).
- **IR119 Tax relief for vocational training (UK)** – provides tax relief on payments for training which count towards NVQs, SVQs, GNVQs and GSVQs. In order to qualify, recipients must be at least 16 years old, and not in full-time education at school. They should also be studying on courses which are full-time or substantially full-time. The tax relief is only available to individuals, not to employers paying for their employees' training (www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk).

5.3 State funding

Less common is subsidised support for training and such schemes tend to be targeted at particular individuals or types of employer:

- **Adult Education Initiative (Sweden)** – in addition to targeting initiatives at the unemployed, the AEI also provides for adults who are employed and intend to study at the compulsory level. The AEI Special Educational Grant, which corresponds to unemployment benefits, is available to employees provided they have been working for five years, and the employer replaces the individual with an unemployed person. It can be applied for by those aged between 15 and 55. In addition, there is the 'Svux' – short-term support for those in employment who have taken a leave of absence for study consisting of a grant plus a loan to 35 per cent of the total (Eurydice, 2000).
- **KY programme (Sweden)** – for advanced vocational training at post-secondary level. Financed under the same umbrella as the Adult Education Initiative, arranged as a partnership

between educational providers and employers. Participants normally spend one year in the workplace and two years at an educational institution (Eurydice, 2000).

- **Small Firm Training Loans (UK)** – loans provided by a partnership between government and conventional banks, available to businesses with less than 50 employees. The loans have a deferred repayment and government pays the interest on the loan during the first year (Verry, 2000).

5.4 Time off for study

Finally, a key concern for some employers is the opportunity cost that training away from the job involves. A few countries operate fairly wide-ranging schemes, while the UK gives young people in work the right for time off for approved study:

- **Releases from work (Austria)** – active since the beginning of 1998, those who have been employed by a company for at least three years can be released from work up to a period of twelve months for educational purposes. Instead of their normal salaries, employees are paid a monthly allowance by the state. The use of the educational release has to be approved by the employer, but employees are entitled to return to their company at the same working conditions after their release (Ofner and Wimmer, 1998).
- **The Act on Leave scheme (Denmark)** – financial support has been available since 1989 for adults with a low level of education to take a career break for training. In 1992 a training leave system was introduced, enabling all employed, self-employed and unemployed members to get support for up to one year's training on a range of approved programmes (Danish Ministry of Education, 1997). While not a direct evaluation of this programme, one in three Danes do some form of adult learning or training each year – a reflection of the Danish philosophy of education and lifelong learning for all people (Eurydice, 2000).
- **Law for the financing of career interruption (the Netherlands)** – employees are able to get an allowance when they are on leave for a period of time of between two and six months, provided they take leave for at least half their working hours and are replaced by an unemployed person. The purpose of the leave is not specified, but it is thought that it will most usually be used for training, or caring for relatives or friends. However, the allowance received (income support) is far short of wages and so would not compensate for foregone earnings. Employees do not have a legal right to this leave (as they do in Sweden) and so can be prevented from taking it by their employer (Baaijens *et al.*, 1998).
- **The right to time off for study or training (TfST) (UK)** – this came into force in September 1999, giving 100,000 16 and 17

year olds an entitlement to reasonable paid time off from work to achieve a qualification at level 2. A qualitative evaluation found that good practice included co-operative approaches between TECs and careers services to follow-up young people known to be in jobs without training. Employer visits have proved to be more effective than mass mailouts to promote the recognition of the right amongst employers. Barriers to take-up included: young people's unawareness of their right, or fear in approaching their employer, lack of clarity in which training would be most appropriate for them, lack of self-confidence. Amongst employers, barriers included lack of awareness, disregard for the need to train beyond induction, resistance to study and training unrelated to the job, misconceptions about what the right involves. For careers services, converting employers to training through face to face contact is too resource intensive, TfST is not seen as a high priority, some misconceptions on it as a programme rather than a right. It is believed that the TfST has had a positive impact on the take-up of Modern Apprenticeships, and there are signs that the direct impact may be growing (Gerrard *et al.*, 2000).

5.5 Partnerships

Some of the more interesting schemes developed in recent years involve unions and employers working together to stimulate demand for training among employees. The initiatives generally involve some combination of:

- improvements in provision – *eg* through the provision of local learning centres
- provision of advice and guidance – ranging from union officials (learning representatives) acting as intermediaries promoting learning options to their members through to the provision of professional advice
- stimulation of interest in any form of learning – whether vocational or not on the premise that non-learners may get hooked on the 'learning habit' through initially finding out about a personal interest or hobby.

The initiatives include:

- **The Union Learning Fund (UK)** – aims to promote union activity to support the creation of a learning society. In round one (1998), the Fund had £1.8 million spread across 45 projects, run by 21 union organisations. It targeted union members, union activists, young and excluded workers and families and communities. Practical achievements include 20 new or improved learning centres; more than 2,000 people having received training; six projects being linked to ILAs; nine being linked to UfI. The Union Learning Fund has been subject to

two external evaluations. The first found that round one had been a success, with almost three times the number (1,000) of union officials receiving training to be a learning representative than had been planned. However, there were some difficulties with project management, and the evaluation also found that more work needed to be done in stimulating the bottom up demand for learning. Employers have reported increased interest in learning opportunities, partly through the trust built up with learning representatives, and have viewed the support available from the union as positive. The evaluation highlighted commitment of unions, and links to strategic plans together with policies of partners as being key to sustaining successful learning outcomes (Shaw, 1999). Round two saw a greater number of learners, over 6,500 at the time of evaluation (little is known about the impact this had had on them), 1,600 trained union learning representatives (fewer than expected), and over 1,000 employers involved. The Fund continues to be successful in attracting non-traditional learners including those needing help with basic skills, and at the other end of the spectrum, developing access to and provision of continuing professional development. The survey highlighted the need for on-going support and training for learning representatives. There was some evidence of longer-term union strategy development; this was seen to be key in sustaining the project's momentum, and in integrating it more widely, *eg* in developing mainstream funding sources other than ILAs (Cutter, 2000).

- **Incumbent worker training flexibility (US)** – allows for more flexibility in state funding of continuous learning and IT training initiatives. Examples of retraining include partnerships between labour unions and employees. They offer short-term retraining to employees whose skills will soon be obsolete, this can be especially beneficial for middle-aged and older workers, enabling them to remain competitive in the marketplace (21st Century Workforce Commission, 2000).

- **Employee Development Schemes (USA, UK)** – originally pioneered in UK by Ford and its unions. They aimed to foster a learning culture by funding learning carried out in employees' own time, usually not with an immediate connection with the business. Such schemes have proved effective in securing a positive attitude to learning throughout the workforce, alongside other business-related benefits, *eg* reduced absenteeism, lower staff turnover (Parsons *et al.*, 1998). During the European Year of Lifelong Learning, Northumberland TEC promoted a Scheme to local employers by distributing leaflets and running seminars (Tuckett, 1997).

- **TUC's Bargaining for Skills projects (UK)** – launched in 1996, the projects involve the unions working with employers through TECs to set up workplace learning centres, *ie* taking learning to the learners (Tuckett, 1997).

Training provision with a contract, by the Randstad temp agency (the Netherlands) – the largest temp agency in the Netherlands employs around 300,000 workers, well over one-third of all temporary staff in the country. It provides its staff with training in order to keep bridging the gap between the skills demanded by clients, and skills supplied by temporary workers. In doing this it risks losing them to permanent employment. Hence, to prevent poaching, workers sign a contract before commencing training. The contract stipulates that employees should pay a share of the cost – this is deducted from subsequent earnings. If the worker stops working for Randstad, the debt must still be repaid. Only if Randstad cannot find work for an individual do they not have to pay the share towards the training they received (Baaijens *et al.*, 1998).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a range of initiatives aimed to increase the demand for learning at work, or to ease the process for those wishing to undertake learning away from work. A mixture of obligatory and voluntary approaches has resulted in the following measures: employer contributions, tax incentives, state funding, time off for study, and partnerships. These were found in the UK, and across Europe and the USA.

Amongst employer contributions, the obligatory schemes in Canada and the Netherlands appeared to have been successful, although in both cases the difficulty of reaching SMEs was highlighted. Tuition accounts in the USA have had some support, but further information on their scope is needed. It is interesting that the Canadian scheme mentioned above superseded a tax incentive which did not achieve the volume of participation hoped for. The US federal tax code does show some promise although its temporary nature may preclude an evaluation of long-term success. We were unable to find any evaluative evidence on tax relief measures in the UK and the Netherlands. Similarly, whilst state funding measures were found in Sweden and the UK, there appeared to be a dearth of information on their impact. The Swedish grant provided to workers undertaking training is at the same level as unemployment payments, raising questions about whether this provides a true incentive to learn. It is also questionable whether the UK's small firms training loan would, in isolation, stimulate demand for learning. The fact that employers need to pay back the amount suggests that only those who already see the value of learning would be enticed to invest in training as a result of this scheme.

The initiatives providing time off for study also seem to require some prior appreciation of the benefits of learning amongst those who participate, or those who allow them to. The schemes in Austria and the Netherlands rely on employer discretion. The UK scheme, which is currently in its early stages, is finding that

employer awareness of the right is a significant barrier. One of the most interesting initiatives in this section is the Act on Leave scheme in Denmark, as it only benefits people who can benefit most – those with a low level of training.

Partnerships, which have been found to be key components of success in many of the other initiatives outlined in this and previous chapters, seem to hold substantial promise. The UK's Union Learning Fund, although still in its early stages, has started well, with evaluations of the first two rounds evidencing success in terms of infrastructure and new learners. Employee Development Schemes, also with union input, have proved extremely successful in both the USA and the UK. From this evidence it seems that partnerships have much potential for ongoing evaluation and future expansion both in and away from the workplace.

6. Conclusion

In this review we have identified a wide range of measures to stimulate demand for learning. While we cannot say that they form a comprehensive list of initiatives worldwide, they do represent a large cross section. Most of the 100 or so initiatives we have identified are from the UK. This is obviously a consequence of our search strategy, which in the time available was concentrated of necessity on English language (and mainly UK-based) sources. However, it does reflect the attention given to the issue within the UK over the last few decades. Other countries that are well represented in our review include Sweden, the USA and, to a lesser extent, Australia, Ireland and Denmark (see Appendix 1).

In this concluding chapter we look across the initiatives identified to draw together some indicative conclusions. It is difficult to be too definitive for two reasons. First, the lack of conclusive evaluation evidence means that it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions about the relative merits of the approaches adopted. Secondly, even where we know how successful a particular initiative has been, the many contextual differences between countries makes it very difficult to infer its relevance to any other country.

6.1 Taking the initiative

The initiatives have been largely categorised by the audience they are seeking to address and to an extent by their particular approach. We have distinguished between three broad types of initiatives:

- those which seek to raise the general demand for learning through publicity and campaigns; through the provision of advice and guidance; by providing financial support to individuals; and through making learning opportunities more accessible
- initiatives targeted at particular groups of non-learners (such as young people, women and the unemployed)
- measures aimed at increasing the take-up of learning at work, through financial incentives or other means.

6.1.1 Raising mass demand

From what we have seen, the UK provides some of the best examples of the first approach through the Adult Learners' Week and the Campaign for Learning, mirrored to an extent by Adult Learning Australia. While such campaigns, particularly those involving television, can be effective in raising awareness of available learning opportunities, the extent to which they influence people previously deterred from participating in learning to change track remains unclear.

Various studies, have shown the importance of advice and guidance for adults, either on a large scale or as part of a comprehensive programme (*eg* the New Deal in the UK).

Financial incentives through some form of individual learning account are provided in the UK, the USA, Canada and Sweden. One of the key concerns with such a measure is the potential degree of dead-weight involved, *ie* subsidising people who would have taken part in learning in any event. However, the Individual Development Accounts in the USA and Canada seem to be effective in attracting participation from low income groups (but not from people with a low level of initial education).

Raising demand by making it easier to participate appears to be a feature of a number of countries' approaches and seems to be an effective policy, especially if combined with the provision of financial incentives and advice and guidance. Finland in particular appears to have a particularly wide-ranging strategy in this regard.

6.1.2 Targeted initiatives

A wide range of initiatives is targeted at particular groups of non-learners or skill issues. A number of measures could be described as *preventative* – *eg* seeking to encourage young people to stay in formal education and training for as long as possible. Others are more *remedial*, aimed at getting people to 'return to learning' through tackling specific barriers such as those encountered by economically inactive women with caring responsibilities, or specific skill issues among the unemployed or more generally (basic skills or IT skills).

Among the preventative measures, those in Denmark offer a wide-ranging 'open' curriculum, which appears to be effective in improving retention. Other effective measures appear to include:

- the following up of young people who drop out of the reformed Upper Secondary Education offered to 16-19 year olds in Norway (which the OECD described as a model from which other counties might learn)

- changes in the benefit rules favouring full-time students in Australia (AUSTUDY)
- Youthstart in the UK.

The initiatives we found aimed at increasing participation among economically inactive women tended to be small-scale and focused on the UK. Those seeking to improve the skills of the unemployed appear to be more wide-ranging and comprehensive, often offering a combination of advice and guidance and tailored learning opportunities (*eg* the New Deal in the UK). Understandably, such schemes also tend to focus on vocational learning linked to notions of improved employability.

Community-based schemes tend to fall into two camps. There are those seeking to overcome access issues, particularly in rural areas, where the emphasis is on distance learning techniques, increasingly embracing new technology as a delivery platform. In deprived urban areas the schemes appear at the same time to be:

- *smaller in scale*, due to their focus on specific communities, yet
- *wider in scope*, embracing a range of measures to raise interest and motivation in learning, advice and guidance on appropriate opportunities and the provision of learning centres (*eg* the Family Learning Centre in East Leeds).

6.1.3 Work-based initiatives

The main approach adopted to raise participation in learning at work is to encourage employers to provide more training, on the assumption that employees will participate if given the opportunity. One of the key issues here is the different patterns of training investment among employers. Hence a number of measures require all employers (within certain sector and size categories) to spend at least a certain amount on training either through enforcement (*eg* in Canada) or compulsory levies (*eg* the Netherlands). They appear to have had some success in raising the volume of training activity, though in both cases there are apparently still problems raising the level of training spend in small firms. In these cases the training offered is likely to be very vocational and job or firm specific.

An alternative approach is to encourage employees to participate in their own right at work-based or community learning centres – particularly in basic skills or IT training where they may have large skill deficits but lack the confidence or motivation to address them. Here the UK's Union Learning Fund and Bargaining for Skills initiatives have led to the development of a network of work-based learning representatives; intermediaries who appear to be particularly effective acting in an 'honest broker' capacity to raise demand for and facilitate access to training for non-learners. This success highlights the role intermediaries can play in raising

demand for learning among certain groups by gaining their trust, convincing them of the benefits of learning and pointing them in the direction of relevant opportunities.

6.2 What works?

There is a clear interest in what works in terms of generating and sustaining interest in learning. Here we have a problem due to the lack of effective evaluation evidence. To some extent this is surprising, given the attention the issue has obviously received across the world. However, given the complexity of the issues and the latency of the outcomes in some instances perhaps it is understandable. Most of the evidence that does exist tends to cover the participation and reach of the schemes, *ie* the numbers involved *etc.* and stakeholder perception, *ie* what those involved thought of the scheme. There is a particular dearth of data which links the intervention to the desired outcome, *ie* a sustained participation in learning activities. This is not uncommon and in part reflects a policy-formation culture where being seen to be doing something (preferably innovative) is as important if not more important than achieving success. However, it also reflects the difficulties inherent in summative evaluations including:

- distinguishing between the range of factors which influence the outcomes of interventions
- the difficulty in determining the counter-factual (*ie* what would have happened without the intervention), and
- the time it takes to see whether a policy is effective or not.

For example, the efficacy of measures to maintain young people's interest in learning may only be measured years down the track, and only then if sufficient longitudinal data sets have been maintained.

6.2.1 Success factors

However, the evaluations that have been conducted have been able to identify a range of factors which seem to be critical to the success of the initiatives. For example:

- high profile, intensive (and costly) use of the media, especially TV, is successful in raising awareness and increasing interest, although it is important to note that this does not indicate its success in directly stimulating demand
- a key ingredient of many community-based programmes is that they are targeted at individuals and groups and can reach and stimulate those normally not attracted to more traditional programmes, particularly where they develop an effective partnership with a range of relevant organisations

- successful outreach efforts involve intensive, targeted promotion, using a combination of methods, *eg* local radio broadcasts, leafleting; setting up desks in places where target groups are likely to go, *eg* social welfare offices; developing links with other organisations, *eg* training providers, employment services; and word of mouth, *eg* using past participants to encourage others to join
- US research suggests that initiatives aimed at preventing young people from dropping out of learning, based on increased choice together with financial support, are important in sustaining interest in learning in later life (*ie* maintaining their motivation to learn).

Many of these points reflect McGivney (1992) who identified the following factors, preferably acting in combination, which seemed to encourage adults to participate in education and training, and to seek employment:

- demonstrate clear links between training/education and employment
- offer widely recognised qualifications
- ensure that the benefits of participation exceed the potential risks
- offer financial incentives to those who undertake education/training
- use targeted outreach approaches
- recognise personal circumstances
- respond to individual learning needs
- provide counselling support
- encourage group support
- provide practical work experience and help with establishment of a work routine.

6.2.2 An ideal approach

Despite the lack of evidence the review does suggest that in an ideal world a comprehensive policy to stimulate the demand for learning would contain most or all of the following:

- multi-level approaches – *eg* including measures which act at a national level to develop a 'lifelong learning culture' such as the Adult Learners' Week and Learning at Work Day as well as locally based initiatives to bring the message to the doorsteps, *eg* the Adult and Community Learning Fund, and the small-scale initiatives aimed at women, such as the YMCA programme in Northolt.

- multi-stranded approaches including **preventative** measures – to reduce the extent of the problem in the longer-term, *eg* by encouraging young people to stay in formal education and training as long as possible alongside well-targeted **remedial** initiatives to tackle specific problems, *eg* the Adult Literacy Service in Ireland, and the community-based ICT initiative, 'Silver Surfers' in the UK.

Both cases involve a mixture of longer-term initiatives, in which the outcomes may take years to materialise and shorter-term more instrumental measures where the outcome is more immediate (and therefore measurable).

In addition the review highlights the importance of a supportive infrastructure – which makes it as easy as possible for reluctant learners to find the most appropriate learning opportunity – involving:

- a range of intermediaries, including employers and advice and guidance specialists, as well as organisations that can influence specific groups of non-learners, *eg* neighbourhood groups and unions
- flexible learning provision – providing learning in the shape, size and place to suit learners rather than providers.

However, the precise combination of approaches that best addresses any particular target is less easy to discern.

6.3 The gaps

The review highlights a number of gaps both in the range of approaches adopted and in the literature.

On the former:

- Most of the initiatives appear to be focused on making it easier for people who would like to learn, but find it difficult for one reason or another – deterred learners – rather than the unmotivated, those who see no advantages in learning – the non-learners.
- There are far more initiatives aimed at younger people than older people; while this may reflect the importance attached to getting non-learners into learning at the earliest opportunity, it does leave a significant group of the population disenfranchised.
- The measures aimed at encouraging work-based learning find it most difficult to raise participation among small enterprises and we didn't find an initiative which seemed to be effective with this target group.

In terms of the literature and data sources we have also identified some gaps and suggest some ideas to fill them:

- It was immediately apparent that descriptions of initiatives and any evaluative evidence are widely dispersed. It would seem sensible for such information to be pulled together at regular intervals to ensure any relevant lessons can be widely learnt. With this in mind, this review could be seen as a starting point for a more comprehensive database of learning initiatives, linking details of the action to evaluation evidence, perhaps developed in conjunction with an international agency such as the OECD or the EU.
- The review has also highlighted the dearth of summative evaluation evidence. It may be interesting to confirm whether this is the case and if so why. It may also be useful to develop methods and means to encourage policy makers to establish whether the initiatives they take to stimulate demand for learning have the desired effect. Finally, the evaluation evidence needs to be pulled together to compare the effectiveness of initiatives and combinations of initiatives and to place the results in a wider educational, social and economic context.

Appendix 1: Initiatives Cited in the Review

Africa

The African Virtual University (p. 42)

Australia

Adult Learning Australia (p. 14)

AUSTUDY (p. 29)

Full Service Schools programme (p. 30)

Open Learning Australia (p. 22)

Pensioner Education Supplement (p. 36)

The Youth Allowance (p. 30)

Austria

Releases from work (p. 50)

Viennese Employees' Promotion Fund (p. 36)

Work foundations (p. 35)

Belgium

Duracell battery initiative (p. 36)

Integration of Senior Citizens in Society Home Care Service Programme (p. 32)

Canada

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) (p. 18)

Tax Training Credit (p. 48)

The Act to foster the development of manpower training (p. 47)

Denmark

Education and Training for All (p. 27)

Guidance Centre Experiments (p. 17)

Labour Market Training Fund (p. 48)

The Act on Allocation of Financial Support to Folkeoplysning (p. 19)

The Act on Leave scheme (p. 50)

Ireland

Adult Literacy Service (p. 38)

The 'Back to Education' initiative' (p. 17)

Training fund for employees (p. 48)

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) (p. 34)

Women's Education Initiative (p. 32)

YOUTHREACH (p. 29)

Italy

Integrated Higher Vocational Education and Training (IFTS) (p. 22)

The Netherlands

Job guarantees after training (p. 34)

Law for the financing of career interruption (p. 50)

Sectoral levy system (p. 48)

Tax facility for training employees (p. 49)

Tax relief for employees (p. 49)

Training provision with a contract, by the Randstad temp agency (p. 53)

New Zealand

New Zealand's Qualification Framework (p. 22)

Study Right (p. 30)

Norway

Reform 94 (p. 28)

Portugal

National Agency for Adult Learning (p. 17)

Sweden

Adult Education Initiative (p. 33, p. 49)

Individual Learning Accounts (IKS) (p. 17)

KY programme (p. 49)

The Forestry Project Initiative (p. 41)

UK

Adult and Community Learning Fund (p. 42)

Adult Learners' Week (p. 12)

Ascent 21 (p. 43)

Bargaining for Skills (p. 52)

Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership (p. 39)

'Computers Don't Bite' campaign (p. 39)

Cut, Advice and Blow-Dry (p. 32)

Double Take project (p. 30)

East Leeds Family Learning Centre (p. 43)

Education Maintenance Allowances (p. 31)

Electronic Village Halls (p. 42)

Employee Development Schemes (p. 52)

Family Literacy Initiative (p. 44)

Foyer Federation (p. 31)

Hackney Wick (p. 43)

Heart of Hackney (p. 43)

Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) (p. 17)

Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) (p. 16)

Inn Tuition/A pint and a prospectus please (p. 43)

learndirect (p. 16)

Linking unemployed women with employment opportunities (p. 33)

Make it Count, and Numbers at Work (p. 38)

Moss Side Initiative (p. 43)

New Deal (p. 34, p. 36)

'New Opportunities for Women' TV promotion (p. 32)

'On the Move' Literacy Campaign (p. 37)

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Prince's Trust Action Initiative (p. 31)

Silver Surfers (p. 40)

Small Firm Training Loans (p. 50)

The Campaign for Learning (p. 14)

The right to time off for study or training (TfST) (p. 50)

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